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MIRIAM SEDLEY;

OR,

THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

BY

LADY BULWER LYTTON.

Heart—Affluence in discursive talk,
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;
* * * * * *
And Manhood fused with female grace,
In such a sort the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked with thine,
And find its comfort in thy face.

ALFRED TENNYSON'S *In Memoriam.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
W. SHOBERL, PUBLISHER,
20, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1851.

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DÉDICACE

À LA

COMTESSE HENRIETTE D'ANGEVILLE.

Très chère, et bien digne Amie,

Voyez comme la vanité se mêle de tout dans ce monde ! même de l'amitié la plus sincère, et de la reconnaissance la plus profonde ; car je vous avoue que me voici toute glorieuse de pouvoir ainsi associer mon nom au vôtre, par l'intermédiaire d'une dédicace. Mais, comme Plutarque a bien dit dans sa Vie d'Alexandre : "Ce n'est pas toujours dans les actions les plus éclatantes que se montrent davantage les vertus, ou les vices des hommes ; une action ordinaire, une parole, un badinage, font souvent mieux connaître le caractère d'un homme, que des batailles sanglantes, des siéges et des actions mémorables."

Et moi, chère amie, je veux suivre un aussi bon exemple ; et puisque vous avez si long-temps posé

en ami modèle—c'est dans vôtre cœur d'or, dans vôtre zèle perspicace, dans vôtre dévouement infatigable, dans vôtre haute intelligence, (qui ne se voile jamais parcequ'elle est toujours éclairée par le cœur) que je veux puiser mon éloge de vous:—toute *rará avis* que vous êtes—espèce de Sévigné tramé Bayard! car pour la correspondance vous pouvez *au pied de la lettre* prendre vôtre place à côté de la première, et pour le courage, et la loyauté, tenir tête au dernier de cap-à-pied, étant sans contredit à la fois, une des femmes la plus spirituelle, et *des hommes* le plus honnête que je connaisse.

Vous voyez que je ne souffle pas mot de vôtre ascension miraculeuse de Mont Blanc, ni de la petite poste que vous aviez établie sur la cime, écrivant et expédiant cinq lettres (je crois) par cette entreprise *non* générale! Ni de vos triomphes et vôtre couronnement à Chamounix, ni même de vôtre magnifique Album! tout *auréolé*, qu'il est des chefs-d'œuvres des artistes les plus célèbres de l'Europe, car tout cela appartient au monde et à la postérité; mais *vous*, vôtre bonté et vôtre amitié, ce sont mes trésors *à moi*, et j'ai le droit de m'enorgueillir. Ce n'est pas pour dénigrer vos exploits de Mont Blanc, mais au bout du compte qu'avez-vous vu de si extraordinaire? *Une* pauvre petite Mer de Glace! Ah! chère, venez y en Angleterre, et vous trouverez des familles toutes entières de glace! Fait physiologique qui me porte à croire, que si

Socrate avait été Anglais, en priant les dieux de lui défendre de ses amis, le brave homme aurait ajouté et surtout de mes parents ! Vous vous rappellez ce que nôtre pauvre amie la Princesse Alexandre Galitzin disait à propos des G****** en le préfaçant de " Faut être juste, ma chère—mais—" eh bien ! vous n'avez qu'à faire l'application. Et ce n'est point étonnant, vu que l'idolâtrie du veau d'or soit notre culte national, à quelques belles et bonnes, exceptions près, la *Femelle Britannique* (animal sans cœur et sans tête, inédite par Buffon) est vraiment une nullité odieuse, et voilà pourquoi le commerce social est une chose incomprise chez nous ; car, tandis que la France a produit tant de femmes célèbres et de grandes dames,—l'Angleterre ne fait guère que *mettre bas* (et *à bas*) des *femelles !* des femmelettes et des *fine Ladies !* La première ne sait rien, la seconde ne fait rien, et la troisième ne dit rien ! et toute cela se suivent, comme les moutons de Panurge ; veut on s'affranchir de ces " Tartes à la crême " capacités, et pénétrer dans les côteries où l'on fait de l'esprit par métier, on ne trouve guère que des hommes pédants, et assommants ; et des femmes précieuses et sans grâce morale, ou physique. Quant au mâle, il se rétranche dans un égoïsme profond, et une apathie sublime, et entre ces deux gouffres, il traite la *femelle !* de haut en bas, adoptant un style Sor-

bonne, et toujours faisant des expériences *in animâ vili*, dans ses relations avec elle. Avouez que c'est dure, quand on a respiré cette atmosphère électrique et attrayante des beaux esprits de l'Hôtel Castellan (où on y a été même un peu incensé); et qu'on a eu ses entrées, au vrai musée de célébrités *aimables*, réunies dans les salons de Madame Récamier; oui, chère amie, et quand par-dessus le marché on a été gâté par de bonnes causeries, si intimes et si spirituelles, chez nos bonnes amies Pallard de Waldemberg, Madame C. avec ses réminiscences personnelles de Göthe et de Jean Paul; et Anna avec ses petits soins et sa bonté intarissable, qui bien sûr aurait fait la conquête de Richter s'il avait été des nôtres, en chair, et en os. Hélas! chère amie, que de crêpes ont voilé nos deux existences, depuis ces douces veillées, quand je riais de grand cœur avec vous; aujourd'hui je pleure de même, et la sympathie, croyez-le, n'en est pas moins cordiale, pour en être plus triste. Vous dites vrai, chère bonne; que ce sont les vivants qui me font la guerre,—mais—mais—c'est la mort qui a remportée la victoire! car il paraît que le ciel prend son bien partout où il le trouve—et voilà pourquoi les anges ne restent jamais longtemps sur cette terre, toute jonchée qu'elle est, de cœurs brisés, de mécomptes et de regrets!

Adieu chère et digne amie, je vous embrasse dans

vos montagnes, et quand je pense que les dites montagnes nous séparent, je suis prête à chanter avec le Fou de Tolède :

" Ce vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou ! me rendra fou ! "

Si j'étais homme, du moins, ce serait toujours *fou de vous* ! Maintenant il faut vous contenter de ma *folie bien raisonnable* de vouloir non seulement vous la répéter, mais le dire à tout le monde, que j'ai l'honneur d'être, chère *Reine de Mont Blanc* !

Vôtre toute dévouée

Et bien affectueuse amie,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Londres, ce 31 Mars, 1851.

20, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET,
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MIRIAM SEDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Reader, hast ever towards the close of an autumnal day, alternately cantered and strolled by the sea-shore, when the tide was out—each wave of which had, however, left its indelible impress along the crinkled sands as well as a few weeds, and shells for children to pick up, and naturalists to speculate upon? If so, thou wilt know, that there is a sort of dreamy pleasure in marking those traces; and, here and there, picking up a shell, or a pebble, or it may be a weed, left by that great tide.

It has been finely said of Napoleon Buonaparte,

> "That the ebb and flow of his single mind,
> Were as a tide to the rest of mankind!"

Above that tide, were also many bright luminaries:

which like it, have passed away from our actual sphere to roll on like the other meteoric marvels of Omnipotence, into the great ocean of eternal light. All these have past for you as well as for me; but they have left their indelible traces on the world; for great minds are the landmarks of Time. Come, then, reader with me, if you have an idle hour at your disposal, and I will show you a few of the shells, and weeds I have picked up, "en laissant trotter la plume et lui abandonnant la bride sur le cou;" as Bossuet said of Madame de Sévigné; whom for your sake, to say nothing of my own, I regret I am not! When Cato at eighty-six, was for the forty-fourth time cited to appear before the Tribunal of the Roman People, he exclaimed, "how difficult it is to give an account of one's life to those who are not of our own area!" It is true, I am not quite eighty-six; neither, thank heaven! have I been before the public forty-four times; still there are difficulties in the matter, first because, though this is an autobiography, and consequently I, it is nevertheless not Me; and next, because there is nothing new under the sun, so that "non dicuntur nova, sed novè," is all one can aspire to, unless to be sincere in one's opinions, and fearless in expressing them, from the rarity of the thing may pass for a novelty; so to begin at the beginning.

It was a dark and stormy night at the end of August. The wind was sending forth those mysterious wailings, which are alternately like the low, hollow moan of sup-

pressed suffering, and the loud frantic shriek of insanity which the lower orders of Irish conscientiously believe to be the howling of the Banshee. The rain was pattering against the casement panes, which the hurricane was shaking in their leaden lozenge-shaped frames, and I and my sister Grace were fast asleep, in our little cots, which stood beside each other, in the nursery at Castle Sedley; for so was the home of my fathers still called, though it was, at the time I allude to, nothing more than a long straggling pile of white, or rather of grey building, standing upon an eminence, on that wildest and most romantic of all coasts, the western coast of Ireland; but "once upon a time" when kings were the indigenous production of the Hibernian hedges, as blackberries are now. It had been a castle, and therefore according to that peculiarly Irish custom of giving the finest possible names even to the meanest and shabbiest things, notwithstanding the unchecked delapidations of time, it still retained its grandiloquent name of castle, though all that remained of its architectural honours to entitle it to the appellation, was one solitary turret, in which was situated the nursery aforesaid; and, as it overlooked the sea, poor Grace and I did not fail to be threatened with mermaids and syrens, ever on the watch to take us away, if we were naughty, or as Nelly, our Irish nurse more tersely expressed it, "if we'd be bould."

The entrance-hall at Castle Sedley, was still paved

with grey marble, but broken and indented in several places, and guiltless of oil-cloth; though *en revanche*, a strip of Dutch matting traversed it diagonally; while around its walls were hung the colossal horns of the Irish elk. And upon a huge granite slab, which looked more like a Druidical altar than a table, lay a stringless Irish harp, purporting, by a parchment legend attached to it, to have belonged to the last of the bards, the celebrated Carolan; while above this table was a large, but frameless picture, portraying the scene at Lord Mayo's in which Carolan triumphed over the musical skill of the Italian Geminiani.*

On the right hand side of this entrance was a large barrack of a room, still dignified with the high sounding appellation of the Banqueting Hall, though in sooth it now boasted no higher condiments, nor more luxurious

* The story is as follows: Carolan, an Irish bard, born at Roscommon in 1670, was, in the beginning of the last century attached to the household of Lord Mayo, who brought from Dublin a celebrated Italian performer. Carolan, who till then, had been much courted and applauded for his musical skill, now found himself greatly neglected, and complained of it one day in the presence of his Italian rival. "When you can play in as masterly a manner as he does," said Lord Mayo, "I promise you, you shall not be overlooked." Carolan upon this, wagered with Geminiani, that although nearly a total stranger to Italian music, yet he would follow him in any piece that he played, and that he would himself after play a voluntary in which the Italian should *not* follow him. The proposal was acceded to, and Carolan, to the no small discomfiture of Geminiani, was eminently successful in both wagers.

tokens of good cheer, than the innumerable carrots, onions and dried herbs, that strewed its floor for winter consumption, while ripston pippins, quinces, Chaumontelle pears, as the aristocracy of the kitchen garden occupied the Dais, and sent (as I well remember) their conflicting and anything but agreeable odours in contraband whiffs across the hall, on the left-hand side of which was the dining room, with its coarse scarlet moreen curtains, trimmed with black velvet, and black velvet plague spots, bursting out about the draperies, according to the prevailing epidemic among dining-room curtains at the period, (1812) when the war was raging not only between France and England, but against everything like good taste both in dress and furniture.

Down the centre of the room rolled a long dark mahogany horse-shoe table, which stretched forth its dinginess like an arm of the Black Sea; for French polish was unknown in those days, and the green-baize, bees'-wax, and cork frictions, bestowed every morning by Maurice, the butler, and his colleagues, were neutralized by the stains of claret and punch shed upon it every night. Round this table were a set of *ci-devant* red morocco chairs; but which now looked like a detachment of the 24th Foot (for such was their number,) marching into country quarters, after a protracted campaign on active service, so tattered, and deplorable was their condition, and so dimmed their once scarlet glory.

At the end of the room, in an alcove, supported by alternated pillars, for this room had been modernized according to the most approved bad taste of the time, stood a long narrow isthmus of a mahogany side-board, connecting the peninsula of two more red morocco chairs; and at either end of this piece of furniture were two colossal mahogany tea urns, doubtless intended by the upholsterer as ornaments; but if so, shamefully frustrating his intentions. The legs of this mahogany nightmare were so thin and fragile, as to look quite incapable of supporting so unwieldy a superstructure; for, like all the furniture legs of that period, whether of tables, chairs, or piano-fortes, they seemed to have been "taken at a valuation" from the Spiders' Company "retiring from business," on their own account.

Over the mantel-piece, which was of a plain, ugly, and much veined piece of white marble, too high for modern fashion, and not high enough for that of the olden time, was a picture of my father going to cover, on his favourite hunter, Dare-Devil, with Angus Troil, the huntsman, a *boy* of sixty-three, and all the pack round him on the lawn before Castle Sedley, in the very kitchen of which, unfortunately for me, the claret still flowed as of old, though at that time, in most Irish houses, it had given place to water, or at least to strong waters.

I remember little of my father, except that he was old-looking for so very young a man; for he was not

then more than nine and twenty. I was too young to remark, or rather to wonder, why his hand trembled so violently of a morning; for I *did* remark it, or I should not now recollect it so vividly; but all I felt then was, that for the few brief moments I ever saw him daily, that hand was laid kindly on my head, and therefore I thought I belonged to it, and it to me, and so I loved it; for, having lost my poor mother a year after I was born, I had never known that affection for which every heart, but especially every childish heart, yearns. Although my mother's two sisters lived with my father, ostensibly to take care of Grace and me, yet as the first in command of these two aunts, Mrs. Marley, a young widow without children, evinced a decided preference for Grace, I soon became that most miserable of created beings, the neglected sister of a favourite and favoured child; not that I envied Grace for being loved, indulged, and privileged on all occasions, for it was impossible not to love one so gentle, so gifted, and so good.

I thought it was a matter of course that every one must do so; I only wished that my aunt Marley could have given Grace all her love, without disliking me; fer I *felt* that she *did* dislike me, even more than I perceived it; yet still, each night and morning, when I went to give her my kiss of greeting, or of parting, my heart fluttered in the hope that hers would be less cold—less got over as a matter of course. Yes, day after day, I hoped all this, and day after day I was

disappointed; for, from first to last, life is Fate's game of Blind Man's Buff, in which it is Hope that places the bandage; and for those she favours, she arranges it so that they may, in some sort, see their way; while others she blinds so completely, that in vain they grope, strive, and exert all their skill, still they can clutch nothing but empty air, and to the end everything escapes them. I was of the latter class.

My aunt had the misfortune of being a perfect beauty; I say the misfortune, for it is indeed a "fatal gift," more or less, to all women, especially to those who, like my aunt Marley, had not had the advantages of good early moral training, (which few had in those days, especially in Ireland,) to act as an effectual defence against the treacherous adulation of men, and the still more treacherous envy of women. To add to my aunt's misfortunes, she was naturally a superior-minded person, but her talents were totally without cultivation, or right direction, and, alas! it is in the human, as in the horticultural parterre, the more luxuriant the flowers, the ranker the weeds—when to such they are suffered to run. Weak minds, and negative characters, however much neglected, never can incur the same dangers themselves, or occasion them to others, that perverted energies, and unpruned passions do.

Self-knowledge is a science, which being not only the root, but the most difficult of all sciences, cannot

be too early taught; for self-knowledge is self-government. And that which, in a well-regulated mind, is an admirable strength of character, in a neglected one, is brutish obstinacy. The penetration, and natural shrewdness, which under proper culture, would have been fined into a nice and analytic discrimination of the qualities and peculiarities of others, in its natural and unrestrained luxuriance, becomes a coarse and impatient intolerance of their faults, which only confirms, instead of correcting them: just as violence and impetuosity rivet the knots in a skein of silk, instead of disentangling them, as patience and gentleness might. But worse, perhaps, than all these, in their fatal effects, are the moral and physiological portions of our organization, when neglected, or misdirected; those more subtile feelings and sympathies, which form, as it were, the gamut of our nature, and which, when skilfully handled, may be attuned to such fine harmonies—jarred upon by ignorant teaching, ever become the fearful discords of ungovernable tempers.

God made the world out of chaos. Each mind is but a type of the universe. All the elements for a great and harmonious whole are there; but it requires the will of a Creator first, to separate, and then to bind each, by immutable laws, in the fair circle of federate order; but, when no creative fiat has passed over this mental chaos, it wars, painfully and impotently, against itself, while its powerful, but dark and

unwrought masses, crush, or mutilate all those with whom they come in contact.

The "abstract, and brief chronicle" of my poor mother's marriage, as I learned, in after life, was as follows:—When only sixteen, she had met my father, a lad of nineteen, at some races, at his uncle's, Lord Lutrón's; and my father falling desperately in love with her, proposed for her, at the race-ball that followed, on the same evening; and this being the first ball she had ever been at, or, indeed, the first evening she had ever passed from home, she was, if not flattered, at least fluttered, by the offer. Still she did not immediately accept it, but stammered out something about not knowing whether "mamma would let her." But during the drive home, having proclaimed her conquest to her sisters, Mrs. Marley and Miss Bell Paulett, the eldest of the three, they strongly urged her not to hesitate about accepting young Sedley, whose fortunes, like all Irish fortunes, was reputed to be much larger than it really was. But my grandmother, when consulted, though an exceedingly weak woman in other respects, for, indeed, she was wearing weeds for her *third* husband, and lived to be guilty of a fourth, had sufficient common sense to perceive how terrible a risk her daughter would run, in marrying at her age a boy of nineteen, whom she had only seen once; who had been the spoilt, because the only son of a foolish and widowed mother, and who was, moreover, the ward of his very designing uncle,

Lord Lutron, who had also been guardian to another nephew, whom he had defrauded of a considerable portion of his property, and was trying to do the same with my father (in which he eventually but too well succeeded), and whom he moulded to his purposes by an unlimited supply of ready money, claret, and fox-hunting.

My grandmother, after remonstrating in vain with my mother, who was out-bullied by her sisters, whom my father had promised should live at Castle Sedley, with their sister Miriam, if she would marry him—my grandmother, I say, in this dilemma, wrote to her brother-in-law, Sir George Paulett, requesting his advice and assistance. As Sir George then happened to be Secretary-at-War in Ireland, and had before befriended his sister-in-law, by taking his nephew—her youngest son by her first marriage with his brother—Warburton Paulett, and educating him at Westminster, or rather *trying* to do so, for Charles Paulett was a wild, hair-brained spendthrift, who as yet had never been distinguished but for two things—the first of which was, running away from school, in a post-chaise and four, the bill of which, with that of the hotel at Richmond, whither he had thought fit to retire, he enclosed to his tutor, requesting he might add it to the other accounts when he forwarded them to his uncle; and the next was, his having appeared at the battle of Alexandria (where he was his uncle's aid-*de camp), with* a red silk pocket-

handkerchief rolled round his head, having left his only cocked hat in pawn with a crocodile, on the eve of the battle, by which demi-turbaned *coiffure*, he was mistaken for a renegade Turk, and fared rather worse in the enemy's hands on that account, than he would have otherwise done.

Sir George, who was the kindest and most actively benevolent of created beings, not only wrote back a most charming answer to my grandmother (by the Grace of her third husband, then bearing the name of Mrs. D'Estere;) but also wrote an affectionate and truly paternal letter to my mother, using all his powers of entreaty, which were neither few nor weak, to dissuade her from so rash a marriage. My mother was greatly touched by the genuine and cordial affection of this letter, which went on to say, that she had not even the excuse of a romantic girlish first love for young Sedley, that she had seen nothing of the world, and, therefore, could know nothing of her own mind, or even of her own taste; that the following year he should be returning to London, and should feel great pride in placing his three beautiful nieces at the head of his bachelor establishment, and giving them the advantages of the best society, where they might certainly marry much better than they could hope to do in their present seclusion."

This letter said many more things, equally true and equally kind; and though Mrs. Marley was greatly caught by its eloquence, she was little moved by its

wisdom, especially as next year seemed an eternity to her and her sister Bell, who longed to emancipate themselves from the maternal roof, which Mrs. Marley, though a widow, could not do, having been left almost penniless; and her sister Bell was more than ever eager to change the scene, as within the last four months a certain Mr. Fitzackerly had appeared in the offing. At first it was not clear which of the widows—my grandmother or my aunt, Marley—he was giving chase to, but soon, by the rather frequent supper parties, it was evident that it was the former three-decker he had spoken with. Now these odious hot suppers, and the still more odious hot punch that succeeded them, at Mr. Fitzackerly's especial request, were peculiarly obnoxious to Mrs. Marley, who, from being unfortunately deeply imbued with the pernicious fallacies of the French Revolution (which had then more or less seared their trace through Europe), and who was besides strongly tainted by the corresponding poison of Mrs. Wolstonecraft's book, considered herself a synopsis of all past, present, and future philosophy, and in every respect a luminary in advance of the age; consequently such inferior beings as Mr. Phelem Fitzackerly and the rest of the *Buckeens*, of Clanfuddle, (the country town wherein Mrs. D'Estere resided) were naturally the favourite aversions of Mrs. Marley; while Miss Bell Paulett, with juster cause, disliked the prospect of the spurious control of a *diable à quatre* step-father.

Now, but for the long-way-off vista of another year, there could be no doubt that their kind uncle, Sir George's proposition was in every way the most eligible, the most agreeable, and the most advantageous; but, on the other hand, my father offered immediate possession of Castle Sedley; and to the young, who can afford to wait, the present is everything; while the old, with a degree of childish inconsiderateness that they ought to be beyond, are ever farming out on building leases a future that don't belong to them. Such being the case, my father and Castle Sedley won the day against London and Sir George Paulett. My mother, it is true, urged that it was acting ungratefully by their good uncle; but she was soon talked down by her sisters; Bell calling her an *idjet* (Anglice idiot), and Marcia (Mrs. Marley) telling her that she was too unenlightened to be a judge in this matter, and that marriage was a great social error, a Bœotian mistake, —(if so, it is the very worst of all mistakes, as there is no remedy for it)—but as, in the present barbarous state of civilization, husbands were the necessary consequence of this fatal error, young Sedley would do as well for a tyrant as any other fool.

Strange to say, my poor mother, I have heard, did not seem much seduced by this little statistical tableau of my aunt Marley's. Nevertheless, after two days of incessant door slammnig, flushed cheeks, and high words between the two elder sisters, she yielded to their superior force, and became Mrs. Sedley. It is

needless, perhaps, after this to state that this ill-assorted marriage was none of the happiest, and the eternal pitched battles between Bell and Marcia plunged my poor mother into despair, and drove my father out of the house, and more than ever into the trammels of Lord Lutron. At length, pitying Heaven removed my poor mother to its more congenial sphere, at the same moment that relentless Fate inflicted upon her Grace, and myself, her first and heaviest blow. For a child without a mother is—

"A boat at midnight sent alone
To drift upon a stormy sea."

For the first week after this sad event, the house was still, with the cold, terrible, aching stillness of death; save that my aunts' grief was as violent as their tempers, so that their sobs amounted at times to shrieks,—they nearly hugged poor Grace and me to death, and declared over and over again, that they would sacrifice their lives to us. The word sacrifice was very apposite, only there was a slight grammatical error in the construction of the phrase:—it should have been transposed. For three whole months, all was halcyon calm, and as nothing draws people together like a common misfortune, for that space of time, after my dear mother's death, my father was "*l'enfant chéri de ces dames*" but alas!—

"All that's sweet was made,
But to be lost when sweetest!"

And this was precisely the case with my aunts' tempers, which having about this time reached their hydromelic culminating point, I am truly sorry to say they again began to lose them. The scenes that now ensued were terrific. My father spent the whole day out, either with the hounds or with that other fox, his uncle, and, alas! on no single night, or rather morning, did he by any accident go sober to bed. This deplorable vice, begun so early in life, the vehement upbraidings of my aunt Marley, and the coarse and publicly expressed invectives of my aunt Bell, confirmed into an incurable habit. The former he had nick-named the Goddess of Reason, and the latter the Duchess; and when they began (which they did even before the servants) taunting him with his disgusting, beastly habits, he replied with a laugh:—"That's all to your advantage, my dears; for any man in his *sober* senses would turn you out of the house before he'd submit to your tempers." To which his cousin, Tom Lutron, would politely add, when present at these *mêlées*:

"And why don't you do so, Godfrey?—d——l take 'em."

"No, no, my dear Tom, he won't; the d——l knows better what he's about, than to make his dominions too hot, or he'd get no one to stay there." Such would be my father's rejoinder, whereat my aunts would exit at separate doors, and a cannonading of slamming (which the servants termed a field day),

would shake the whole house for three hours after. My aunt Bell had erected me into an idol, in opposition to her sister, with whose taste on any point hers seldom coincided. But this partiality availed me little; as, in consideration of her matrimonial honours, my aunt Marley was first in command; so that early in life I learned one of its bitterest lessons, that of the passiveness, and powerlessness of friendship,—compared with the zeal and potent sway of enmity!

Often was I the innocent cause of strife between the sisters, through my childish restlessness, or importunities; when the younger would be stretched upon one sofa deep in the perusal of some French or German philosophical work, that had reached her translated, *viâ* London; while the elder reclining upon another couch, was dropping a silent tear on the delicate distresses of some Minerva Press Heroine, I, who having in vain, by means of paper and pins, and the back of my spelling-book for a drawing-board, tried to lithograph one of the large green geranium leaves that stood boldly out on the light yellow-grounded chintz of the drawing-room curtains, and as vainly tried to seduce the ever good and obedient Grace from her book, or work, into making a noise, would then proceed, slate in hand, and kneeling down before one of the high, hard, gilt and painted cane-bottomed arm-chairs, would make a daring attempt to copy some of the wreaths of very scarlatina roses, and cholera morbus looking forget-me-nots, that meandered along the back of it.

But, being no genius, I only succeeded in making a most atrocious squeaking of the pencil against the slate, which would so irritate my aunt Marley's philosophical nerves, that I generally received, previously to any milder order to desist, a box on the ear from her, that not only sent me measuring my length upon the floor, (and if the evil had extended no further it would have been of little consequence), but which also set me roaring in a manner that must have given a convincing proof, had any such been wanted,—which indeed I don't think it was—that the lungs of the Sedleys (always so celebrated) had not degenerated. Then would my aunt Bell, hastily deserting "*The Humane Assassin*," or "*The Innocent Highwayman*," or whatever other equally delightful and instructive fiction she was engrossed in, fly to the rescue, exclaiming:

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mrs. Marley, with your philosophy, and your nonsense, to treat the poor darling child so: Come here, Miriam, my darling, and aunt Bell will give her a peach; come; and we'll go to the hot-house for it."

But at these offers of pacification I only screamed the louder, and rushed unappeasably out of the room, as I had seen Bell herself do, under similar aggravating offers of atonement on the part of my aunt Marley, or my father; and if in my flight I chanced to fall in with the latter, he'd catch me up in his arms, muttering an oath against my aunts, and say, "What's the

matter, Mirry, my darling? what have they been teasing papa's fairy about? which is it—the Goddess of Reason, or the Duchess?—deuce take them!"

And when as soon as I could speak from the big stag-like tears rolling like a cataract into my mouth, I had sobbed out an explanation of the affray, he would judiciously tell me not to mind them, but run back and just put my head in at the drawing-room door, and say:

"Ah! I don't care for you, for papa is going to take me out to ride before him on Dare-Devil; and he says, I shall set up all night if I like, and have as much cake as I can eat!"

Such was the auspicious commencement of my education;—but it is high time that I should return to the eventful night of the 13th of October, 1812.

CHAPTER II.

WELL, as I before said, it was a terrific night, and the storm threatened, and the owl hooted, and the old walls rocked at Castle Sedley, when Mary Caisy was still trying to wake Grace, who slept more soundly than her volatile sister, whom Nelly had just succeeded in awakening.

"Get up alannah! there's a darlint now; get up for her own Nelly Bawn?"

"No, no," said I, rubbing my eyes, and yawning, but far too sleepy to cry. "No, Mirry *won't* get up, for papa said I should not get up to breakfast if I did not like."

"It's not *breaquist*, mavourneen," rejoined Nelly.

"What then! is it supper?" said I, now actually opening my eyes at the idea of the forbidden pleasure.

"Sup sorrow, I'm thinking," muttered Nelly, wiping the corner of her eyes with her apron.

"Where are we going?" asked poor Grace mildly, as with her usual docility she was submitting to being dressed.

"Whisht!" cried Nelly, turning sharply round, for I was her favourite, and like all persons addicted to favourites, she could not do without a counterbalancing victim—and Grace served her for that purpose—especially whenever Nelly was in grief—a weakness that she always concealed under an assumed asperity of temper. "Whisht there, Miss Grace, childer is to do as they're bid, and not to be tazing a body inside out wid questions; the misthress says yer to go, and that's enough."

"But go where?" asked I authoritatively, being now thoroughly awake; "tell me, Nelly, for I *won't* get up till you do."

"Sorrow a know I know—where it is yer going, macouchelagh."

"Well, then I won't be dressed;" and I suited the action to the word, by kicking Nelly away, who was trying to put on my shoes; but, nothing offended beyond a sharp "be quiet, Miss,"" to poor Grace, who was neither speaking, nor moving, nor even struggling, she returned to the charge.

"Now, look at here, darlint, see, its yer fine red shoes that yer so fond of, yer fine red cherry shoes, that as Dermot says you'd entice the birds off the threes

wid, and sure you won't refuse to put *thim* on, anyhow?"

"But I *will* refuse though, and I don't care for my red shoes, nor for Dermot, nor for you either, for you know very well where we're going, and you won't tell me; and I'll go to grandmama Fitzackerly's to-morrow, and I'll have Catty O'Brien for my nurse, that's what I'll do;" and then knowing that my tears were irresistible to Nelly, I perorated this piece of oratory with a violent flood of them.

"Whisht now! there's a pet,—my soul to glory, if I know where yer going, but I b'lave it's to the Ginral's, —that's to Sur George Paulett's;—long life to him, for he's the rale gintleman, and spoke up agin the Union as loud as Grattan himself; and it's Dermot that knows all his printed spaches by heart, and has thim pasted all over the cabin; and thrue for him, as he says, now that poor Ould Ireland is gone to the wall, so should the best of good spaches that tried to difind her. All I know is—stay now, give me yer fut, there's a darlint—Master Charless arrived in a big ship two hours ago,—a yochte (yacht,) they do be calling it; and the wind roaring, and the say raging, and he wet to the skhin, by raison of the open boat he was obleeged to come ashoore in. Fust, he axes for the masther? but hearing that he was gone to the Lord's, 'All right,' says he; and then making but won bound of the fust flight of stairs, he pops his head in at the drawing-room dure; (this Morrish tould me, who was

saving the tay there. So don't go and tell it on me agin, Miss Miriam, alannah ;) and says he, as soon as he put his head into the room where the Misthuss and Miss Bell was at tay: 'I'm your man,' says he. 'In the name of wonder, Charless,' says they, 'is that you?' 'Don't yez see it is,' says he: though I don't wonder at they're not knowing him at fust, for Masther Charless stands so far behind his nose, that it's like a shade to him, and scranes him from observation for a while. Well thin, it sames he ups and tells 'em that he was come to take 'em all on a visit to Sur George's, who was now living in some beautiful place, in the Medetation Say, (Morrish called it,) wherever that is. And och! murther, the confusion iver since Masther Charless has been in it. The ordering here, and the scraching there; Miss Bell blazing away like a kitchen chimney a-fire, or as the Masther says, and thrue for him, like a barrel of gunpowder, stirred wid a red-hot poker; and the Misthuss telling us we all are unlighted brutes and fools, and I the most unlighted of any of them. 'May be so, Ma'am,' says I, 'but I don't wish, plase God, to be lighted any more nor I am, aither in this world nor the next.' And now get up, honey, for I've toult ye all I know, and endade (only the thruth's not fit to be spoke at all times) a thrifle more. Och? bad luck to ye for bells! there they ara again tearing the lungs out of the metal, as if it was for the divil's wedden;— they were ringing! and who knows, maybe it's Miss Paulett! that's going to be married all in hurry at last."

I now required no further entreaties to get up. The idea that I should at length behold my grand-uncle, Paulett, of whom I had heard so much, and whose picture I had thought the most wonderful thing in the world, as it hung and covered one side of my grandmother's dining-room, representing Sir George—a very handsome and aristocratic looking man—writing a despatch upon a cannon; while a little Arab boy was holding his horse, and a brilliant *état-major* occupied the background.

"But papa is going, too?" asked I, so suddenly raising my head, that I gave my forehead a violent blow against the brush with which Nelly was brushing my hair. Poor Nelly! whenever it was not convenient to her to answer a question specifically, she always grew cross;—so now almost shaking me, she said:

"Whist! now, Miss Miriam, you do be axing too many questions entirely; there down wid you and say your prayers, for it's prayers I'm thinking that is naded, when paple does be going timpting the say such a night as this."

"Well, but," said I, determined to try and satisfy myself upon another point before I said my prayers, that I might the better know what to ask or to thank God for, as I invariably did (thanks to poor Nelly's, in that respect, right tuition) for every childish happiness that befell me; "tell me, Pomba's going, isn't he? for I won't go without him."

Pomba was a Spanish pointer, which had been sent

to my father from Spain by my uncle Charles, (the hero of the red pocket-handkerchief at the battle of Alexandria, and who had now come to take us to Sir George Paulett's,) and Pomba being the first friend I ever had among his incomparable race, I ought to have mentioned him before.

"So he is coming, too, isn't he?" persisted I.

"Av coorse," replied Nelly, "what would the poor baste do, and you no longer in it, but howl himself to an echo just."

Re-assured on this head, I knelt down, and said my prayers; thanking Heaven most devoutly, for letting me go to my grand-uncle Paulett's; and concluding my orisons as I always did, with "And pray God do—do bless papa!"

"And the Lord be wid him," added Nelly, solemnly.

After we had said our prayers, it was always Nelly's custom to make us kiss each other; so, now throwing my arms round Grace's neck, I said:

"Oh, Grace! don't you love grand-uncle Paulett?"

"No," replied Grace, calmly, "for I don't know him."

"But every one loves him who knows him, Grace; so you ought to love him."

"Well, perhaps I shall, when I *do* know him," said she.

Even I, unreasonable as I was in all things, could not exact more, and so I remained silent for about a

minute; I mention this circumstance, merely because it was not one that often occurred.

There we stood for the last time under our father's roof—at ten and eight—the perfect type of what we should be at seventeen and fifteen; or at seventy and fifty, were it God's will that we should live so long:—Grace ever calm, dispassionate, and just; never giving her love without cause, never disliking without reason, but never allowing dislike to amount to hatred; and girding herself like a panoply, against all danger, with the prudence of submission: whilst I, on the contrary, was a sort of whirlwind, woofed with a will-o'-the-wisp! ever loving and hating, out of hand; wedding myself in haste to every impression, and, as is the natural result of so doing, repenting at leisure; writhing under the least sense of injustice so bitterly, and quite as much for others as for myself, that I must expose and avenge it, though perdition were staring me in the face, as the reward of my Quixotism. In a word, though they were not then discovered for general use, all my sensations, feelings, and impressions, were communicated to me by electric telegraph; or, as my dear good uncle, Sir George, used continually to say: "I hate your tortoise-brained people as much as any one; but hang it, Mirry, *you* always arrive at your journey's end the day before you set out!"

"Och, moucha! but it sames mighty like robbing

a house to me, packing up the alls at this time o'night, and the masther from home."

At this soliloquy of Nelly's, I turned round, and saw that after having hay-stacked Grace's and my clothes into a trunk, she had spread a shawl upon the floor, and was throwing all our books and toys into it, pell mell.

"Oh, Nelly!" cried I, rushing forward in the vain endeavour to persuade her that a cart-wheel going over it would endanger the nose of my wax doll.

"Never fare, allanah," said she, still persisting in her Juggernaut operations, without the least consideration for my effigeic, maternal feelings, "never fare; sure if it was the greatest lady in the land—the Lady Liftinant herself—she'd be liable to lose something on a journey; and if Miss Wapsey (the romantic cognomen of my doll) does lose her nose itself, sure it's better, mavourneen, that it should be by your own cart-wheel, that she knows, and that she's druv (driven) out in so often, than have it blow'd off maybe in this Meditation Say,—bad luck to it for a say, wherever it is."

"Oh! if you please Nelly give me that!" said Grace, stretching out her hand, for the second volume of the "Parent's Assistant," which our remorseless nursery Nemesis was about to cram into the jaws of a very respectable middle-sized alligator, that my uncle Charles had had stuffed, and brought home, for our especial edification.

"Oh but you do be muddling your brains wid de

larning, Miss Grace ; said Nelly flinging it to her, in her usual ungracious manner. Here the nursery-bell began pealing, with a fifty fury power that at once proclaimed the practised hand of my aunt Paulett.

"Och, bad manners to you, Miss Bell Paulett," but you'd bother the patience off of a monumint."

"Tare an agers, Nelly woman, be quick," said Maurice putting his head in at the door, "for the Carge is all packed, and Masther Charless says the tide won't sarve, if ther not down by the wather side in half an hour."

"Och ! murder ! listen to de night !" said Nelly, completing her arrangements by tightening the knots of the shawl with an energy that nearly caused her to burst a blood-vessel, previously to snatching her black silk bonnet from a neighbouring peg, and letting it light upon her head like a crow's nest.

"Whew !" cried Maurice drawing a long whistle as he jerked the bundle upon his back, and lifted up the trunk in his right hand. "Whew ! summer brazes, Nelly, summer brazes. Miss Bell bangs the storm to tathers ; I tell you the thunder's a fool to her, and they say a mere boul of new milk, that falls aslape over its foaming ; so you'd better make haste."

We all four hurried down the nursery-stairs, preceded by Mary Caisey, who acted as *avant-courier* to announce to my aunts that we were "coming." On arriving at the corridor where the bed-rooms were situated, Nelly burst into one convulsive howl, but

suddenly checking herself, she told Maurice to go and deposit his burdens in, or on the carriage; and to say that the young ladies was riddy, and would be down immagetly. Then, taking one of each of our hands in hers, she ran, or rather flew, along the passage; dragging us after her, till she came to the door of my father's bed-room, which was quite at the end of it, and seizing a lamp that burned all night on a bracket outside, she flung open the door. The room being very large, and now without a fire, was cold and desolate; and the feeble rays of the lamp not being enough to make the objects around distinctly visible, fell obliquely upon the old bugle tapestry curtains of the bed, which stood in an alcove at the far end of the room, and whose uncertain glitter now conjured up the most horrible visions to my superstitious fears. I clung to Nelly and buried my face in her shawl.

"Come on, me darlints," said she, again hurrying us forward.

"Oh, but it's not the mermaid's cave, is it?" cried I, still hanging back. "I'll be good, indeed I will, Nelly; only take me out of this."

"Mermaid's cave, what would make ye think that, mavourneen; no, it's only the masther's bed, and I thought the laste they might let yez do, was to lave him a mouthful of prayers afoore ye went."

And so saying she lifted me up, carried me to the side of the bed, which I now perceived it really was,

and no cave, as she laid down the lamp upon the table beside it.

"But isn't papa coming with us, then?—poor papa, he shall come."

"There you are wid yer questions again, Miss Miriam. Knale down there both of yez, and say won prayer for the masther just."

"But if papa," began Grace—

"Whisht! say your prayers, Missh, and mind God never listens to the prayers of childer that do be axing questions."

"Then what's the use of our asking him to bless papa?" said Grace.

"Och, becase there's no question, but he'll attind to that; but yer larning, I'm thinking, is making you mighty pert, Miss Sedley."

We knelt down, and repeated word for word the prayer dictated by Nelly, that God would "bless, comfort, and *purtect* our father," and I have no doubt with what she considered "good emphasis and discretion," that is, in a brogue as rich, if not as sonorous as her own. In rising, I kissed the pillow, saying as I patted it, as if it had been Pomba herself: "There, poor papa, there's a kiss for you,—and you'll come soon, won't you?"

"What nonsense, Mirry," said Grace, "papa won't know that you've kissed the pillow."

This truism procured her left shoulder rather a

rough shaking from Nelly, who, having the tears now streaming down her cheeks, was getting very cross indeed.

"Oh! den faix, Missh Grace, if you never do good, or do right, in this world; but when it will be known and praished for, I'm thinking it's little good ye'll be afther doing, and that little itself by raison of the motive you put in it to be praished up and thanked, ye'd better lave alone, for thims not the kind of good dades that St. Pether (glory be to his sowl this night) takes the throuble of opening the gates of Hiven for." And here Nelly crossed herself devoutly, and Maurice's voice being now heard above the storm, loudly calling upon her to bring us down stairs, she hurried forward, carrying the flickering lamp in her right-hand, while she dragged me along with the other, telling Grace to "run for her life," *anglice*—to make haste.

The hall presented a sort of graphic tableau of the Tower of Babel. My aunt Bell—thundering and lightning all the servants, as Nelly expressed it—my aunt Marley wringing her hands, and turning up her eyes at the gross ignorance by which she was surrounded, and which could not perceive how much it would be to its advantage to be guided by "an unerring mind like hers!" The modest expression was her own, and therefore I use it. While my uncle Charles—that most popular of personages among children and servants, from the fact of his being an incarnate *émeute*—a systematic subverter of all established rules, and

defier of existing powers—in short, an ambulating revolution! was alternately flinging some, no doubt, rare jests, in Irish, at Angus Troil the huntsman, whose enormous mouth, stretched even wider by a broad grin, remained wide open ready to bolt them, as one of his pack would have done by a lump of meat,—and then twisting Pomba's beautiful long, soft, smooth, velvety brown ears, he would cry out in Spanish, with a long see-sawing "Ay, ya!" when the dog jumped vehemently up at him in his ecstacy of play:

"Muy Señor mio, y mi dueño?"* till with a great deal more of similar mock courtesy and respect, he had succeeded in extricating his hand from the dog's mouth.

"Get into the carriage, Miss, directly, and don't stand fooling there with the dog," said my aunt Bell, who, among many other elegant Irishisms, always Missed Grace and myself, when she was angry; so that we were not often addressed without this ceremonious formula; and, on the present occasion, having seconded it with anything but a gentle push, I was about to obey, when my uncle Charles seizing me round the waist, tossed me like a parcel into the hood of his phaeton, and Pomba after me; so that I was perfectly happy with my best friend, from the novel and contraband position in which I found myself, for

* My lord and master: which is the address that inferiors in Spain use to their masters and superiors.

both my aunts kept screaming out: "Oh, Charles! Charles! the child will be killed! there, bring her down, and put her into the carriage."

"Not a bit of it," said my uncle Charles, as he sprang into the phaeton, gathered up the reins in one hand, and pulled up the collar of his great coat all round his face with the other, previously to seating himself. "Not a bit of it; she's as snug there as a bee in a hive, are'nt you, Mirry?"

"Oh! much snugger," cried I, grasping the lining of the hood, till I almost broke my nails, from the intuitive knowledge that possession was nine points of the law; which, however, as I discovered in after-life, vary like those of the compass for some favoured mortals, who are the spoilt children of misfortune. At the expiration of half an hour's drive, we arrived at a little creek in the Bay, dignified with the name of pier, where we found the boatswain and four of the crew of 'The Ocean Pearl,' Sir George Paulett's yacht, awaiting us.

"Beg your pardon, Captain," said the former, springing out of the pitching boat upon the pier steps, as he touched his hat, and accosted my uncle Charles, "but I was to give you Captain Boswell's compliments, and he didn't think it was a night for the ladies to put to sea, as the wind is right a-head; and just before we came off, all hands were piped aft to put the ship about, and no boat can live scarce."

"Pooh! Bozzy is always looking out for squalls,

Jeffs," said my uncle Charles; "and, though I prefer a skin-full of wine to a cap-full of wind, thanks to my intimate knowledge both of the Bay of Biscay and the contrabandistas, I'm neither afraid of the one nor the other: however, it's for the ladies to decide, as the expedition is theirs. Mirry, my trump," added he, jumping out of the phaeton, and throwing the reins to the groom; "hold on till I come back."

So saying, he walked to the carriage in which my aunts were, and tapped at the window for them to lower it, which when they had done, he repeated to them Captain Boswell's message.

"Of course," said my aunt Marley with a determined air, alighting from the carriage and walking hastily to the phaeton, from which she ordered me to descend. "Of course, in this barbarous and unenlightened country, intellect is always to be subjugated by ignorance. I don't pretend to control my sister; every human being should be free. She may come or stay, as she pleases, but I'll not be controlled."

She walked to and fro in a very excited manner, as if all the bystanders had attempted corporeally to impede her progress, which was by no means the case, only my aunt Marley's philosophy was of that high, lofty, and, I may say, inaccessible kind which never lowered itself to the common and ordinary exigencies of life, so that my poor aunt was always left to contend with them by her physical energy alone, which the vulgar were apt to mistake for temper.

My uncle Charles walked hastily up and down with his hands in his pockets, and his hat on one side *à la tapageur*, every now and then tossing his head, and saying: "Hang me, if I don't think you are mad;" one of those assertions, which in the Hibernian sense of the word madness, viz., to be furiously out of temper, was sure to verify itself. But the same Providence which "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," also presides over the roarings of lions and tigers, and there was this merciful dispensation attending the eruptions of my aunt's physiological volcanoes, they never both exploded against any third party, at the same time. No, except when engaged in single combat, their tempers were like buckets in a well, whenever one was up the other was down, ay, down to velvet paw and cooing dove point, and, consequently, just as my aunt Marley was about in the same breath to commit tautology and supererogation, by repeating to my uncle Charles, for the twentieth time that day, "that he was without exception the greatest fool that ever existed"—my aunt Bell advanced, and in the most gentle sou'west tone said, laying her hand upon her sister's arm:

"My dearest Marcia, no one wishes to control you: Charles said, it was for you to decide, and we are only waiting for you to do so."

Such is the power of truth that it leaves the most loquacious or ingenious without a reply; so finding it impossible to make every body change places with

her, and be in the wrong, which was enough to provoke any one, my aunt Marley, without uttering a word in answer to this exordium, walked majestically on and descending the steps, got into the boat, which by the sudden impetuosity of her *entrée* she nearly capsized. This of course was the fault of the sea, at which she flung an imperious and commanding look, doubtless because ladies in those days were not even as well acquainted with the abridgment of the History of England as they are in these, or she would probably have recollected that, with regard to commanding the waves to retire, *Canute* and *cannot* are synonymous.

My uncle Charles, with the expressive pantomime of much southern gesticulation, said something in Spanish to Jeffs, at which, it was evident, it required all the habitual discipline maintained on board the 'Ocean Pearl,' and the rough sleeve of his pea-jacket beside, passed hastily across his mouth to prevent his replying to by a loud laugh. Meanwhile Nelly, having let go my hand, in order to clasp her own, as after crossing herself she fell down in the mud upon both knees to implore St. Luke's *purtection* for us, I made sure of Pomba by taking my uncle Charles's pocket handkerchief, and tying it round the poor animal's neck.

"And why St. Luke, above all the saints in the calendar, Nelly, asthore?" asked my uncle Charles in a brogue as rich as her own, as soon as she had finished her prayer. "I thought St. Luke was a painter?"

"Whisht now, Masther Charless, don't you know

that all the mad-houses does belong to Shaint Luke, (the Lord be wid him this night), and istent it a boat load of mad Shaint Pathers we are just to be fishing for ship-wrecks in the salt says such a night as this, when, I'll be bound, if we could get at the truth of it, the fishes thimselves, poor bastes, do be wishing they wash in the frying-pan even to be out of it."

"Ha, ha, ha, or into the fire itself Nelly, eh?" said my uncle Charles.

"Faix then, may be so, and small blame to them."

Jeffs was right; the boat could hardly live, and laden as it was, it offered a ponderous resistance to the storm-lashed waves that was truly terrific; and more than once were we within an inch of becoming acquainted with the "treasures of the deep," for every time the boat lurched the weight was so excessive that it seemed to be pressed down into the fathomless gulf, without the power of righting itself. But for Jeffs' admirable presence of mind at the helm—as I have since constantly heard—nothing could have saved us. Indeed, I have also been told that my aunt's gratitude to this worthy man was so great, that although not in the habit of having any plan, sentiment, wish, or opinion in common, (save on the score of politics, upon which they were most unanimously republican, that is, addicted to levelling upwards), the same thought had struck them at the same moment.

Though they had plenty of money, as indeed in my infantine financial notions I thought all grown-up

persons had, yet, from an extensive acquaintance with the heroines of the Minerva Press, they preferred acting as if they were bereft of all worldly resources, save that miraculous and inexhaustible stock of beauty, ringlets, white muslin, and jewellery, of which neither shipwrecks, incarceration, famine, nor even years, are able to deprive those singularly-favoured ladies. Therefore, in this spirit of princely pauperism, my aunt Marley had just taken a diamond ring, and my aunt Bell an emerald one, from her finger, to present to the worthy boatswain, when we at length reached the deck of 'The Ocean Pearl;' but, unfortunately for Jeffs, my uncle Charles, in slipping a £5 note into his hand, which I have no doubt suited it even better than the diamond and emerald rings would have done, happened to say:

"Why, Jeffs, my hearty! Pitt was a fool to you; you are the real pilot that's weathered the storm."

Upon which, my aunt Marley, thinking the comparison odious, turned to Jeffs, with such a gesture of authority, and at the same time of appeal, that had a new coinage been about to be struck, it would have done admirably as a model for that of Britannia ruling the two inches of tributary waves which skirt her extensive dominions, on the reverse of a halfpenny, and said:

"I am sure you are too honest a man not to hate the very name of Pitt?"

"Why, no, Ma'am: I can't say as I hates any one,

not to say downright properly hates 'em, unless it be the French, and Mother Carey's chickens," said Jeffs, as having removed a quid of tobacco from a silver box, in the shape of a high-heeled shoe (said to be the exact size and model of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York's), was, as he himself would have expressed it, "stowing away my uncle Charles's £5 note at the other end of it." "And lor, Ma'am," continued he, as he returned his portable bank into his trousers' pocket, "I considers politics is just like sperits—some takes to one sort, and some to another; it all depends upon which one's been brought up to, and what one's 'customed to; and all I know is, aboard the 'Victory' we aless (always) gave three cheers for Billy Pitt, and I must say, I wish as we'd a done it oftener, for worse luck that we didn't."

"How so?" inquired my uncle Charles, as both my aunts, with a contemptuous shrug, returned their respective rings to the snowy fingers upon which they were wont to sparkle, but still riveted to the spot by a curiosity to hear the boatswain's reply—a curiosity which even my aunt Marley's great mind was not superior to; for all persons in the war, however democratic their opinions might be otherwise, were great hero-worshippers; and the fact of Jeffs having served under Nelson, was quite sufficient to insure him even my aunt Marley's philosophical attention.

"Why, you see, Captain," said the boatswain, "this

is how it ware. The first mate aboard the 'Victory,' was as reglar a true blue as ever ran down a privateer —a staunch Pittite as ever drew breath, as you may 'spose, when he used to argey, that even the baccy was all the better for being taxed, and never drank nothink but gin ashore, for fear he should be guilty of drinking run brandy, or rum unawares. Well, it was aless his way, when all hands was piped to breakfast, or dinner, to give three cheers for Billy Pitt, as a sort of grace like, but more especially whenever the decks was cleared for action; and on the very morning of the 19th of October, as we was a lying off Trafalgar, and had just squared yards, and every gun was manned. 'I say, Jeffs,' says he, putting his finger to the starboard side of his nose, and winking up at Lady Hamilton's picter, as was nailed to the mast-head, 'it hain't the picter as 'ill do it—it's three cheers for the pilot as has weathered the storm—for Billy Pi—;' but afore he could finish the word, the Admiral ordered the 'Victory' to be put about, and brought alongside of the 'Santissima Trinidada.' He'd hardly given the command, when that cursed rifleman from the 'Bucentaure' sends his murderous bullet whizzing clean through Nelson's heart—the first and last shot that had ever made *it* quail.

"'I knew it!' said the first mate—we all knew it then, and so did the whole world soon after. It 'ill be seven year now, come the 19th of next October,"

concluded Jeffs, passing the back of his hand across his eyes; "and yet, somehow or other, my heart springs a leak every time I think of it."

"I don't wonder at your devotion to the memory of Nelson," said my aunt Marley; "but on that very account you ought to execrate the name of Pitt, for but for his barbarous and bloodthirsty love of war, Nelson might have been alive now."

This was the very last argument likely to make a convert of a British tar, especially one of 1812, as my aunt soon perceived by Jeffs' reply.

"To be sure, Ma'am," said he, "Pitt was the sailor and soger's best friend—aless for keeping up the army and navvy—and no one can deny as he was a true patriot; as I have heerd say a many times, that his last words was, 'Oh, my country!'"

"Ah!" cried my uncle Charles, who sometimes perpetrated a spurious witticism, "turn about, you know, Jeffs, is fair play; and all his life his *first* words were, '*Pay*, my country,' for he did make it pay for everything with a vengeance! even for the light of heaven, which was too bad in a 'heaven-born minister;' but this, no doubt, was a cunning device, to prevent the Whigs, as well as the people, from seeing daylight."

This *mot* of my uncle Charles's I had heard repeated so frequently, that I have no merit in remembering it; and, as for the death of Nelson, so often and graphically had I heard that described by Jeffs in after

years, that, were I an artist I could certainly paint a very fine historical picture from his description of it. What happened after the foregoing conversation I know not, for Grace and I were conveyed to our respective berths. All I know to a certainty is, that between one and two in the morning, Nelly, white, as her own cap, seized me from the cabin floor on to which I had been thrown by a tremendous lurch—for the ship had struck! and we had only time to reach the deck, and from thence be transferred to the boat, where Jeffs did his best to keep my aunts quiet, at least sedentary; for Captain Boswell persisted in remaining in the 'Ocean Pearl,' determined either to save or perish with her.

Poor Pomba had jumped into the sea, and scrambled up to the sides of the boat, which she very nearly capsized, and into which Jeffs lifted her by the nape of the neck, quite as much with a view to the safety of the crew, as out of kindness to the poor animal. All that I can remember of this eventful night, or rather the six-and-twenty terrible hours that ensued, is, that the waves were mountains high, that the sea birds shrieked, and the storm raged; and so did my aunts, as each accused the other of being the cause, not only of our putting to sea, but even of the elemental hurricane, which, I think, must have been heartily ashamed of the mediocrity of its performance, when it perceived how far it was outdone by my aunts' vocal *tours de force*. Such, I have no doubt was the case, as towards eight o'clock in the morning it retired exhausted from

the contest: but the poor boat had sprung a leak, and though Jeffs and my uncle Charles took it, turn about, to pump most indefatigably, another hour must inevitably have introduced us to the mysteries of the deep, had not Jeffs hailed a large fishing-boat, with a latteen sail, whose two occupants not only consented to receive us, but for £20 to convey us to Milford Haven.

No sooner were we transferred to this ark of salvation, than Nelly very properly made Grace and me kneel down to thank God for our deliverance; and most fervently did we enunciate that portion of the Lord's Prayer which implores "our daily bread" as hunger had become a perfect giant, for oh! nature in youth at least, thou art omnipotent; and thy two first great laws, hunger and sleep! not even those mighty autocrats sorrow, and fear, (which rule our after-lives) can then set aside. But when we asked for bread; though it is true Nelly did not give us a stone, which would have been difficult, seeing our actual *locale*; yet she silenced this gastronomic extravaganza, with a—

"Whisht! now, young ladies, sure it's no time to be giving yerselves up to gluttony and faisting (feasting) whin y'eve just escaped bane made breakquist for the fishes; an though it's hard to know another person's intarior at any toime even, a whales, yet you that do be so curious Miss Mirry. I'm thinking for oncet you'd have had enough to stare at, if instead of seeing this bright sun show'ring down diamonds and jules, by

the sack full, all over the say, and enjoying these light brazes, (glory be to God for the same) you'd ave bin like Jonah, by this time prying into some whale's private affairs, without even the chance of getting turned out for yer pains."

It was a common oratorical *ruse* with Nelly to become allegorical in her discourse, and pile simile upon simile, when she wanted to lure away our wills, by means of our imaginations, from any forbidden or unattainable point; and generally her success was perfect as the curiosity excited by her tropes and figures gave rise to such a multiplicity of questions that the labyrinth became complete, and in searching for a clue to it, we were sure to be led far and wide of the premises from whence we had started.

But what chance have the brilliant but fragile flowers of eloquence against the iron logic and stubborn facts of hunger? and we now only clung to Nelly's dress, with a low pertinacious wail, Grace saying in her quiet gentle way:

"Do, if you please, Nelly, give us something to eat for we are very hungry." And I in a sort of imaginative despair conjuring up chimerical banquets in some submarine whale hotel and saying:

"But if the whales would give us any breakfast let us go to them! do, Nelly!" and the "do, Nelly" was always a *dacapo*, accompanied by violent pulling of her gown with both hands, as I looked up into her face with streaming eyes.

"Faix but this bangs the storm!" cried Nelly, able to stand it no longer, and as was her wont, assuming anger to disguise feeling, "and it's a sin and a shame."

"So it is, Mrs. Marley, Ma'am, to have dragged the poor innocent childer into starvation in this way,—thim that's been used to the best of good fading; and it's the masther that it wudn't be safe to see, I'm thinking, when he returns from the Lord's, and finds they're not in it. Och! Weresthrew! Weresthrew! but you may b'lave me, St. Patherick himself hasn't got the meracle that could be afther quitening him."

Nelly sobbed and roared, and rocked herself to and fro, insensible to all the "unenlightened impertinent savages" my Aunt Marley lavished on her, and equally deaf to the consolations which Jeffs and the fishermen tendered for her acceptance, till the latter produced from the locker two pieces of very hard, and very brown, or rather black bread, half of a dried haddock which had been broiled, and a little fresh, or at least soft water, which they poured from a stone jar into a little rusty tin can. The haddock was declined, but the bread gratefully accepted by Nelly, which she steeped in the water for us till it became a little malleable. This repast we actually thought delicious! especially a slight tarry aroma in the water, and a musty twang in the bread, which we with truth declared we had never tasted in any other; and perhaps it was from this profane love of novelty inherent in our fallen nature that we both pronounced it "so nice!"

"Ah! thin it's wild you want to dhrive me entirely," said Nelly, snatching the third piece of this charming *Ambigu* of mouldy bread, steeped in tarry water, that was finding its way as a freewill offering from my hunger to poor Pomba. "If it's so nice, why don't you kape it Miss; and there no more to be had, only starvation in plinty, and to spare for uz all. And sure, childer is not knowledgeable to stand being famished like grown paple."

"By the bye," cried my Uncle Charles, drawing four captain's biscuits and a bottle of brandy from his pocket, (for he was the foreshadowing of Captain Dalgetty, and seldom forgot the provant,) here's all I could seize in the hurry, "but take one, Grace, and give half to Mirry," said he, offering her a biscuit:—but to say the truth, we were both rather sick—not indeed from the quantity, but from the quality, of our repast, and so we declined it. He then gave a biscuit (which at the time was like giving a principality) to each of my aunts, and offered the other two to Martin (my Aunt Marley's maid,) and Nelly; but the latter, though she took it eagerly, conveyed it to her pocket, declaring that she was "Not the laste hungry, and couldn't touch a bit aven if Belshazzer's faste was spread before her."

Poor Nelly! the fraud was a pious one; and I have no doubt but the flock of sea-gulls that skimmed the waters at that moment caught up thy true motive with thy false words, and despite the preventive record

of the Recording Angel, ran it into heaven as a virtue! for when the night again came on, and not a crumb of food remained,—after in vain trying to hush us to sleep, and keep it for the desperation of the morrow, Nelly produced her biscuit, and divided it between Grace and me; which with the thoughtless selfishness of childhood we devoured, without once recollecting till the last morsel had vanished that she had not tasted food for what appeared to us several days, but what was in reality nineteen hours. Our own hunger being sitll unappeased, we began with many tears to bewail poor Nelly's, who as usual, in all cases of conflicting feeling, read the riot act of anger, to restore order, and balance the equilibrium of her own authority.

"Whisht, now, young ladies, be quite, and don't be afther meddling wid what don't concarn yez; why shouldn't I ate if I plased it? Sure, there's fish enough in the say, I suppose, if it was hungry I was."

The night came on, cold and cloudy; a few large drops of rain fell at intervals, as if the sullen sky, in its dark pride, did its uttermost to retain them, till goaded past endurance by the muttered threatenings of the storm they at length fell in torrents, followed by a loud clap of thunder. Jeffs looked up, and shook his head, as the fishermen reefed their solitary sail, while my aunts began to reciprocate reproaches touching their respective authorship of the perils we were

At this unlucky juncture, I complained of the cold, and asked my Aunt Bell "When—when we should get on shore, and go to bed?" why, Heaven only knows, but this query of mine had such an exasperating effect upon her, that instead of replying to it in the common-place matter-of-fact way that would have best suited my anxiety, she took that opportunity not only of informing me that I was a little monster, but of letting me into a piece of the family history, of which till then I had been happily ignorant; namely, that I deserved never to know the comfort of a bed again, considering that I it was, who had brought my poor mother to her death-bed. At this, cold, hunger, sleep, all, were fused in one bitter, burning flood of tears, such as only the heart of a child in its undiscriminating agony can pour out; for childhood, in its fresh prodigality of feeling, is as lavish of its grief as it is of its money; it is only Time in unwinding our clue of life, by bringing us so many necessities for each, that makes us coldly economical of both.

"I, the cause of mamma's death! oh, no, no! Aunt Bell, don't say that. I'll be a monster, or anything else you please, if you will only unsay that I killed mamma," sobbed I, convulsively grasping her cloak but only breaking my own nails in the effort, as she, and the wind together, soon shook me off.

"You did, Miss," was her sharp reply; "for if she had not sat up nursing you in the measles all those

long winter nights, she would not have caught cold, and died."

At this speech Nelly was up in arms, and, catching me to her bosom, wrapping her own cloak tightly about me, and rocking me to and fro, as she impatiently stamped her foot, exclaimed:

"Oh! thin, indade, Miss Bell Paulett, as I am a living sinner dis night, and may soon be a dead one, if it was not that de best always goes fust—it's not de misthress, the Lord be wid her soul, I'm thinking, wud have been taken, but other paple, dat wasn't fit for it; and den, may be, you wudn't have been here now, to have hammered de nails out of her coffin into de innocent heart of her poor orphan child, in de way you've been doing, and more shame to you!"

"Oh, Nelly! Nelly! I didn't kill mamma, did I?"

"No, me darlint, that you didn't, and so she'll tell you herself wan (one) of these days, please God, whin you do be an angel in hiven along wid her," said Nelly, hugging me.

"Oh, thank you, Nelly, and it's not cold in Heaven as it is here, is it Nelly?" asked I, skipping with the volatility of childhood to another range of ideas, and questioning Nelly with an implicit belief in her accurate and profound knowledge of all things in heaven and earth, which at that time nothing on the latter could have shaken.

"No, mavourneen, it is not."

"And how warm is it, Nelly?"

"Why, a thrifle warmer than May, and a few sunbames brighter than July," replied Nelly, nothing daunted, and with all the assurance of a celestial almanack.

"And there's everything in heaven, isn't there, Nelly?"

"Ave coorse, except may be old maids, just, and husbands," said Nelly.

The first exception, no doubt, was a stone in my Aunt Bell's garden, judging by the indignant glance that Nelly flashed at her; and the latter had reference to Nelly's own domestic misfortunes, for though now a member of the only really free state that exists—that of widowhood—she had had a bitter bad husband: and in my onward journey through the world, as I grew up, I could not but remark that bad husbands, like confluent small-pox, even when they die away leave indelible traces for life upon their victims. Nelly, it is true, had great comfort in her daughter, Norah, but Dermot seemed to consider himself heir-at-law to his father's powers of tormenting.

Whether it was Nelly's soothing descriptions of heaven in particular, in which she drew graphic little *tableaux de genre* of angels—reclining upon flowery banks, quaffing cups of cream, and eating cakes of honey,—or her general metaphysics, that sent me at last into a sound sleep, I know not; but, according to

the Scotchman's very accurate definition of metaphysics being "whan a body war talking aboot what tha dinna understan" to a person that did "na ken what they war saying," I rather think it must have been the latter.

All I do know is, that I did not awaken till the next morning, when we landed at Milford Haven; and I very much doubt if Richmond's Earl felt half so elated when he landed there, flushed with high hopes, and intent upon his enterprise against the ruthless Hero of Bosworth, as I did upon seeing the print of my tiny red shoes in the sand, and hearing an amiable waiter from the hotel announce that we should have breakfast immediately.

CHAPTER III.

THREE days were passed at Milford before any tidings arrived of the 'Ocean Pearl;' when at length, one morning while my aunts were at breakfast, Captain Boswell made his appearance, stating that the 'Aphrodite' sloop of war had taken him on board, and towed the dilapidated yacht as far as Milford Haven, for which port he concluded that Jeffs had steered, if indeed the boat had been able to weather the storm; but the 'Ocean Pearl,' he said, would take at least three weeks before she could be made either ship-shape, or seaworthy; and he therefore requested that "the ladies would have the goodness instantly to write to Sir George Paulett, to exonerate him from blame, as it was quite contrary to his advice that they had embarked in such uncertain weather, or at night at all."

"Ay, ay, Bozzy, all right," cried my Uncle Charles,

leaning back in his chair, and laughing as he held the remaining wing of a grouse on his fork in abeyance: "hang me, man, if you are not a sort of naval pack,—I don't mean a pedlar's pack, but Sir Denis Pack,—who in the Peninsula never let us do the most simple thing without invoking the bug-bear responsibility! or scarcely ventured to eat his own dinner for fear of risking the responsibility of an indigestion, till he frightened all the other fellows on his staff into as uncompromising a timidity as his own; but I never used to mind him, but always went on eating, drinking, sleeping, fighting, foraging, charging, or cachouchaing, as the case might be; with, however, a muttered obligato, adagio accompaniment of pag, pag! responsibility, pag!"

"Very good, Sir," smiled Captain Boswell; "but you know, such insubordination in our service would be considered rank Pag-anism."

"Ha, ha, ha! not bad for a bumpkin; but fie, Bozzy, I am ashamed of you," continued my Uncle Charles, shaking his head. "I'll let my uncle know that you keep smuggled puns on board his orthodox government yacht!"

"Can't help it, Sir, if you do," said Captain Boswell, smoothing one side of his hat with the under-part of his right-arm, while the scar on his left cheek reddened into unison with the rest of his good-humoured face; "but I'm not much afraid, for I think Sir George—

God bless him—loves a jest too well not to consider *run* puns all the more *racy*."

"My dear friend," cried my Uncle Charles, with his mouth full of grouse and laughter, which he endeavoured to conceal by holding his napkin before it, as he rose up and walked deliberately over to Captain Boswell, and placing his two hands on that worthy man's broad shoulder, went on to say, "do let me entreat you to leave the room before you commit yourself further, and while you are yet safe from my just indignation!"

My aunts, who the very day after their arrival had driven over to Pembroke in quest of a milliner to replenish their absent wardrobes, and consequently had both very becoming caps on, and who moreover chanced to be in most superlatively good humour, a phenomenon which, to do them justice, did sometimes happen, when all things both in the interior and exterior world concurred to please them, as they seemed to have done on this auspicious day, with one voice, before the door closed on Captain Boswell, expressed a hope that they should have the pleasure of seeing him at dinner; for they were always gracious and patronizing in the extreme, when no untoward *contretemps* sprang up to ruffle their good breeding, or mar their courtesy.

For my own part, had it not been for occasional fits of impatience to reach ———, and ascertain whether my grand-uncle, Paulett, was like his picture, and as

kind as every one said he was, I should have been perfectly satisfied to have passed the rest of my life at Milford, as Grace and I had unlimited liberty all day long of picking up shells upon the beach, with only the gentle restraint of an occasional "don't go so near de waves, and wit your faet, darlints," from Nelly, while she strolled after us, knitting her stockings, or our socks, with an ardour and imperturbability that would have done credit to a German *frau*, or a Vaudoise *femme de charge*.

Then there was the delicious *laissez aller* of an inn life, which suited my desultory nature marvellously, with the contraband tea and toast that had replaced the orthodox bread and milk, morning and evening, and the dining down stairs with my aunts, with a dessert *à discrétion*, or rather *à indiscrétion*, in lieu of the usual tariff, of a peach or a plum, which like the house were divided against themselves, and therefore could not stand in our estimation as a sufficiency; but above all, Pomba was promoted from the straw in the stable to the horse-hair sofa of the inn sitting-room; and all the lesson-books were not exactly where I had so often wished them—at the bottom of the sea; but the next best thing to it—on board the yacht. Now, since, I have often felt convinced that this Milford saturnalia was a master-stroke in domestic diplomacy upon the part of my aunts to obliterate from our young minds the perils and privations of the fishing-boat, and induce us ever after, in recurring to this journey, to speak of it as

the very pleasantest and most delightful episode in our existence, a sort of protocol, in short, that should render the most stubborn facts null and void; if so, so well did they succeed, that when at length 'The Ocean Pearl' was re-set, and all things were ready for our departure, I felt as sorry and as downcast, as if I had taken a homœopathic globule of expulsion from Paradise! that terrible infusion of colocynth! which our mother Eve has bequeathed, more or less, to all, in the human family herbal, which she has left for our use. I think, too, Nelly, must have had a happy time of it during our *séjour* at Milford, if only from the "polite attentions" which I could not but observe Mr. Jeffs paid her, such as spreading a new red and yellow Indian silk pocket-handkerchief for her whenever she sat upon the sands, till Grace and I used to wonder how he came always to have a new silk handkerchief ready folded in the pocket of his jacket, as if it had sprung up there, like a mushroom, for that especial purpose. Moreover, he had a particularly dexterous knack of opening cockles, the contents of which he would present to Nelly on the point of his knife, and then, give the shells to us. I further observed, that after the first time he had offered the Duchess of York's shoe to Nelly, and she had declined partaking of its contents upon the plea that she never took snuff, and did not like sneezing, "except whin she had a *could* in her head, and couldn't help it," three days from thence, he had had the silver model of her Royal Highness's shoe re-

guilt inside, and filled up with caraway comfits, which Nelly did not refuse; and which Grace and I could not help owning to ourselves in confidence, we thought a great change for the better.

Still, altogether he was a strange, inconsistent, absent sort of man was that Jeffs; for I particularly remember one day that Grace and I were perfectly broiled, from a two hours' pursuit of shells under a meridian sun, and that we came panting up to Nelly, to ask her to untie our bonnets, as she was sitting upon a fragment of rock, winding a ball of cotton off a skein that Jeffs was holding for her, he suddenly let his hands fall, and the skein with them, as if he had been shot; and when Nelly said reproachfully:

"Tut—tut; here's a to do; you've got me finely entangled, Mr. Jeffs."

Instead of begging her pardon, as he ought to have done, he only said:

"I wish I had, Mrs. Bawn."

And Nelly said nothing, but got up, and walked slowly on with us, while Jeffs who remained behind, sticking his clasp-knife backwards and forwards in the rock, soon followed us; and then said to Grace and me, though we were still panting with heat:

"Run on, and warm yourselves; there's good little dears!"

I burst out laughing and repeated, "warm ourselves!" but Grace plucked me by the sleeve, saying in a whisper:

"Come away, Mirry, for do you know I think Jeffs is what they call a madman."

Even at this distance of time, after I have seen so many madmen of every description up and down that vast Bedlam—the world—looking back upon poor Grace's opinion of Mr. Jeff's state of mind during that walk, I don't think she was much out.

What must have considerably added to the comfort and tranquillity of Nelly's life at this time was, that not once, during the three weeks and a half that we remained at Milford, had we made the slightest delay or demur about going to bed—for the two nights at sea, in an open boat, had done more to impress us with a due appreciation of that greatest of all creature comforts, than all Nelly could have coaxed, or my aunts threatened. The latter, I suspect, had their own private reasons for not being more dissatisfied than the rest of the party at their detention in what had been to us literally a haven of salvation; for, in the first place, they had my Uncle Charles alternately to pet and to scold; in the next, they had been exploring the country on Welch ponies, and as they were both much given to trying curious experiments in dress—as indeed most persons, both male and female, were during the War, when people were left to their own devices in the way of costume. All that can be said upon that score is, that there is this difference between the human heart and the inhuman taste of the Anglo-Saxons, in all matters of personal adornment, namely, that we

have high authority for knowing the former to be "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" whereas, from my own personal experience and observation, I can without fear of contradiction aver, that the latter is erroneous above all things, and desperately ridiculous; as one proof, among many, of which my misguided relatives had got a strange notion into their heads, that the Cambrian *coïffure* was peculiarly becoming!—The consequence was, that aggravated symptoms of this monomania broke out in both of them on the morning of our re-embarkation on board the 'Ocean Pearl,' when, surmounting their bottle-green habits (which appeared suffering from a perfect erysipelas of sugar-loaf buttons) were their night-caps, or at least what looked like them, in partial eclipse, from an Heliacal rising above them of a man's hat. This extraordinary costume caused them, on account of my aunt Marley's extreme height, and by Aunt Bell's diminutiveness, to look like some sort of quaint hieroglyphical representation of the Great and Lesser Bear.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE nothing remarkable to relate of our second voyage, except that both my aunts and the elements were unusually calm; and that my Aunt Marley, every day after dinner, assiduously endeavoured to enlighten Captain Boswell's mind, by instilling into it democratic and levelling principles, or rather anti-principles, though he never ceased assuring her, that they would be utterly useless to him in the navy, as they were a sort of cargo he dare not take on board any ship in his Majesty's service. While my Aunt Marley encountered this "vexation of spirit," my Aunt Bell was fain to content herself with the other half of our terrestrial heritage, "vanity;" as upon the strength of her very fierce black eyes, my Uncle Charles had assured her that no Andalusian he had ever seen was half so beautiful; the result of which was, that in setting up

for the queen of hearts, Bell left me minus the ace of spades; for not possessing a high comb, with that prompt resource which is so sure a proof of genius, she had spoiled my set of Lilliputian gardening tools, by having had the handle chopped off the spade, the shovel of which was in some miraculous manner planted in her hair, *vice* the absent comb, and, in conjunction with a black silk scarf, did duty as a Spanish mantilla.

Poor Nelly not being as good a sailor as the rest of us, we were chiefly confided to the care of Martin; but it is worthy of remark that nothing could be more amiably obliging than Jeffs was, in performing little works of supererogation, by sparing the steward sundry journeys to and fro to Nelly's cabin, when she was unable to come on deck. I mention this as a proof that men are not so selfish as they are generally supposed to be; but that they are always ready to do—what they like! Grace would quietly pass the day reading an old translation of the Comtesse d'Anois' Fairy Tales, bound uniformly with 'The Princess of Cleves,' in venerable brown leather, which had become black, and polished with age, and which contained the pictures of the original edition—rough wood-cuts, that accused "The fair one with locks of gold," of a desperate obliquity of vision, to which there is not the slightest allusion made in her Memoirs, and that converted "The Blue Bird" into the blackest of black birds!—but which, nevertheless, constituted the delight of the

first ten—indeed, I might with truth say of the first fifteen years of our lives.

The Comtesse d'Anois used to be occasionally relieved by Miss Edgeworth, and Mrs. Trimmer, and one day I had really exhausted myself in my indefatigable exertions to give air and exercise to Miss Wapsey, whose whilome cherry cheeks, I grieve to say (what with the hasty packing, the friction of the tartan shawl she had been tied up in, the shipwreck, and one little *contre temps* or another), had become as pale as those of the White Lady of Avenel. Well, one day that I found neither the sea-air, nor pacing the quarter-deck, could restore their bloom, I put her into her cradle, with pigeon, (for Pomba means pigeon in Portuguese) to watch over her slumbers, and sat down by Grace, who was quietly reading the story of 'The little Merchants,' in 'The Parents' Assistant;' but as, like all dunces, I did not possess many resources within myself, and, therefore, generally played the bore-active in levying contributions upon the time, patience, and powers, of others, I put my arm round Grace's neck, saying, "*Do* read out to me, Grace!"

"If I hold the book between us; can't you read to yourself?" said Grace.

"No, because you know, I can't read the long words."

"But there are no long words, and I've almost finished it; it's such a nice story: it's almost a pity;—however, I'll go back."

"No, no," cried I, stopping my ears, "don't go back; *I* won't listen if you go back; only tell me what it's about, and then go on from where you are reading."

Grace, always ready to oblige, still wished to begin the story at the beginning; but at length I overruled her good nature, and, after having given me a *résumé* of the honest and dishonest proceedings of the two little Neapolitans; the account of the burnt almonds not only made my mouth water, but also giving me sundry qualms of conscience that, under similar temptations, my probity would not be more impregnable than Carlo's was, she went on with the tale, when suddenly the description of the grapes and figs, which Francisco was taking to market, made me exclaim: "What a pity!"

"What's a pity?" asked Grace.

"Why, that we are not going to Naples now, instead of to ———, for then we should be able to get some of Francisco's fine grapes, and figs."

"Oh! if that's all, you will get quite as good, or, indeed, better at ———; for I have read," said Grace, "that the fruit there is so much better than at Naples, as it is taken more care of."

"Dear me, how happy you are, Grace!" cried I; "you know everything."

"Everything! Oh, Mirry!" laughed Grace, "if one was to live two hundred years, one would not know everything."

"Well, but you know a great deal, and that's almost everything."

"No, indeed I don't; I know nothing; and Aunt Marley says that is all that any one can know."

"Oh, does she? I'm so glad!" cried I, clapping my hands. "I'm so glad! for then I need not learn any more lessons, for I know nothing already: and as I can only know that, what is the use of learning to know it, when one knows it without?"

"Oh, because one must learn something, or one would be too ignorant."

"Then it's not true of you, to say that you know nothing, Grace; for you do know something; now don't you?"

"Why, yes," rejoined Grace, laughing, as she kissed my forehead; "I know that I love you, Mirry, and papa, and my aunts."

"Well, that is something, Grace!"

Alas! that even our own feelings should be to us hieroglyphics, engraven in the night of ages by nature's cunning hand, upon the mysterious obelisks of life, so broad and flowing at their base! so sharp and angular at their consummation! Hieroglyphics, too, which none but that great universal teacher and *savant Time!* can translate for us. It was not till after-years had stripped these early affections one by one from my heart, and scattered them like withered leaves along my path, that I felt the depth of prophetic truth contained in the childish reply of:—

the even tenour of our way, till the happy
that Jeffs announced to Nelly that we were off

We might have sailed unmolestedly into its
ght o'clock in the morning; but as my aunts
tly concluded, that Sir George (and conse-
a part of his staff) would be down at the pier
hem, they wisely reflected, that as there would,
babability, be at least a leash of Aids-de-Camp,
f Secretaries, and a Brigade-Major, or so, for
battue they ought to be armed accordingly.
heir toilet was not a thing to be lightly and
lly hurried over; for though to do them
eir implicit faith in the all sufficiency of their
ctions, was quite Calvinistic; yet, on that very
as both Luther and Calvin have impiously and
ally declared that, "good works are not only
ary, but militate against salvation!" my aunts
cæteris paribus, that good works must aid
n. So that the fortifications of ribbon, gauze,

o'clock; and yet notwithstanding these four long hours of engineering, my aunts finally terminated in a kind of demi-flour sack, called at that time a short pelisse; and certainly the shorter this absurd fashion the better. My Aunt Marley's bag was composed of a sort of lilac-twilled, and shot-silk, with a vermicelli pattern, flowing all over it, and trimmed with a deep flounce of black Flanders lace. My Aunt Bell wore a similar sort of case, with the exception of its being a pale jonquil colour, studded at intervals with unfettered shamrocks, in all the *abandon* of single blessedness, and trimmed with white lace. On their heads were white chip inventions, much resembling carpenters' baskets, but called at the time gipsy hats, with a wreath of artificial May (though it was now the beginning of October), budding and blooming round each of them.

I really think that Nelly was little less long over our toilets, though no one would ever have suspected it, who beheld its almost raw material simplicity; for though feeding children was well understood in those days, people seemed (from the highest to the lowest) to think clothing them unnecessary,—as they appeared to consider their necessities in this way were provided for in the schedule of "tempering the wind to the shorn lamb."

After some half dozen quotidian obliterated nankin frocks, (which both Nelly and my aunts, strange to say, used to call "Rockets," why? heaven only knows, as I am sorry to say they never went off, but clung

to us for years.) Our wardrobe in point of gala dresses, consisted of two white cambric muslin frocks each, every two months looking as if they had lost a tooth by the unsightly gap occasioned by the letting down of a tuck; moreover, they bore multiplied evidences of Nelly's notability, as they were thickly inoculated with darns, some of which paired off with occasional iron moulds, with trousers to match. The bodies of these frocks, evinced the true spirit of a liberal economy—that is, they displayed great plenty in one way, namely, the width, while on the other hand, they had no *waist* at all! The sleeves were very short, having no more fulness, than may be seen in a pair of young gentleman's Russia ducks; and yet they were treated as if they had been small balloons, and divided up the centre by a network of cotton twist, debarred from any exercise of freewill by an arbitrary button of the same material; a charity school girl's tippet, and a pair of long white cambric muslin gloves, generally much torn and worn at the fingers, with a cambric muslin bonnet, full of cotton drawings, which like "the course of true love, never yet ran smooth!" but were eternally crossing and re-crossing each other, something after the fashion of the paste machinations of an open raspberry or greengage tart; and a large cambric muslin pennant of distress at the back called "a curtain," to keep the sun from our necks, completed our youthful and unpretending costume.

After these minute details, it is only the ignorant and illiterate perhaps, who will wonder at the time bestowed upon our appearance, on this memorable morning. For as it is well known, that Dr. Johnson used to write off his ponderous elaborations *currente calamo*,—while Sterne used to belabour the flanks of his mock-sentiment Rosinanti, and hammer down a commonplace by the hour together, before he could produce one of his obvious touches of nature, and complex simplicity's! So, in like manner, had Nelly laboured all the morning at our charming simplicity of appearance, for the frocks had been ironed and re-ironed, to try and make the last emancipated tuck look as if it had never existed, or having existed, had never been abolished, but all in vain! There it stared gaping and hideous; and as visible to the naked eye as Cæsar's wounds were, when pointed out to the Roman mob by Marc Antony;—to say nothing of two much-faded, and crumpled, blue lute-string sashes, whose fleeting colours, she had in vain tried to recal by such restoratives, as soap and water, powder-blue, and a cool iron. But so ill did they repay her humane exertions, that even at that time I half suspected (and since that time I have been convinced) that it would have been better to have left them to a watery grave at the bottom of the wash-hand-basin. Nelly, however, thought otherwise, so on they went.

Nelly's own dress, upon this memorable occasion, presented a gorgeous variety, and body of colour, which

had Mr. Turner beheld, he would have been fully justified in indicting her for a burglary upon one of his sunsets! The gown itself, consisting of a bright purple cotton, strewed with a parterre of orange-coloured flowers; a shawl as green as a Devonshire meadow, with an amaranthine border, bright as the asphodel of the Elysian fields, draped her shoulders; bright *coquelicot* ribbons adorned her cap, the voluminous sun-flower-looking border of which appeared to be visibly and momentarily blowing and expanding. But, as our brightest virtues are dimmed by some opposing fault, so Nelly's coquelicot ribbons were mellowed down by the subdued tones of a brown beaver bonnet, guiltless of the "foreign aid of ornament," and, indeed, resembling that "Unprotected female," the lovely young Lavinia, in other respects, for it, like her, seemed to have "no stay, save innocence, and Heaven," as it flapped about, according to the caprices of the wind, in all directions. A pair of new white silk gloves completed this *toilette recherchée*; but there are gloves, occult sort of gloves, which are sacred to the wear of a certain species of old women, the finger-ends of which always appear to be vowed to the celebration of some Eleusinian mysteries, into which they never allow the fingers of their wearers to penetrate—and of this sacrosanct order were Nelly's; in her hand, she grasped, not a truncheon, but a pocket-handkerchief, tightly folded, which for size and texture, bore a strong family likeness to a sheet. In the 'Ma-

gazin de Modes' description I have given, for the benefit of future ages, of my Aunts' dress, I forgot to mention that, despising the usual adjuncts of "leather and prunella," my Aunt Marley wore a pair of emerald-green satin boots, while my Aunt Bell, who considered her foot as only second to Cinderella's, and insulted by any comparison with that of the Venus de Medici's, stood resolutely on this modest ground in a pair of lilac satin *brodequins*. Even Jeffs, as he would himself have said, carried more sail than usual, in a shirt-collar that came up so high all round, nearly meeting in front, and its perpendicular fully secured by his large broad red ears dropping over its snowy wall on each side, that he looked more like that most popular of all nursery pantomimic heroes, Jack in a Box, than a mere flesh-and-blood every-day personage.

My Uncle Charles, having donned his aid-de-camp's uniform, and all things being now ready, Captain Boswell had orders to weigh anchor, and sail gallantly into port. The 'Ocean Pearl,' having all her yards manned, and being dressed in colours, with her union-jack hoisted, really deserved her name, for she looked a perfect gem. A quantity of cushions and squabs having been brought out of the cabin to the benches on deck, my aunts had nothing now left to do but to recline gracefully at either end of the same bench, for that *looked* more united and affectionate than sitting on separate ones; we were also made to kneel on one knee, not on both, as we had at first flumped down,

Grace at my Aunt Marley's feet, and I at my Aunt Bell's, who, by the bye, hurt my elbow terribly in twisting me into the proper attitude.

As we neared the pier, besides the carriages that were waiting for us, my aunts had the satisfaction of seeing that they had not laboured in vain, for my Grand-Uncle Paulett was on horseback, accompanied by the whole of his brilliant staff. And here, I must mention a circumstance, which might have led one to suppose that we had returned to Ireland, and that the natives were blundering out a cordial greeting to us; for as we approached, the band of the — regiment struck up 'Lord Moira's welcome to Scotland.' Why? At this distance of time, it would be difficult to say, considering that, even taking us altogether, we did not amount to Lord Moira, and that Scotland was not the land we were arriving at; I can only therefore suppose, that "it was a way they had" in the war! for a short time after the peace, in the year 1818, a set of Englishmen gave a sort of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" dinner, to several members of the allied army then in Paris; and as, of course, there can be no such thing as either liberty, equality, or fraternity! without drinking divers loyal and complimentary toasts were given, to which the English band in attendance, played what they considered appropriate airs. The great and glorious qualities! of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., for example, being, as a matter of course, trumpeted to the air of

our national anthem—the portly patriotism of Louis Dix-Huit, to that of 'Vive Henri Quatre;' the Emperor of Austria's health, to the 'Chant des Croates.' So far so well; it was only when the Emperor of Russia's health was given, that these modern Orpheuses were fairly puzzled, till suddenly their leader, quick as thought, exclaimed, "Oh, to be sure!" and struck up, *'Green grow the rushes, O!'*

No sooner had the yacht entered the harbour, than my Grand-uncle Paulett dismounted, and in another moment was on board, and had embraced us all round, after which he stood at a little distance from my Aunts, who really did look very handsome, taking off his hat, which he did in a peculiarly graceful manner, and making them a profound bow, he won their hearts by a *coup-de-main*, with the following florid compliment:

"I knew, for I had heard it from all quarters, that I had two handsome nieces, but I had no idea that they had actually monopolized the beauty of half-a-dozen, allowing each of the six to be as well provided as Venus herself."

The dose was a strong one certainly; but then, homœopathy had not been discovered, and in the *war*, people were accustomed to any quantum, either of calomel, or compliments, though, it must be confessed, the former enfeebled their constitutions, and the latter their minds.

Sir George then kissed us again; but poor Grace, always timid, scarcely ventured to look at him, stam-

mered, blushed, and hung her head, while I sprang at once into his arms, returned his caresses with interest, began playing with the aiguillets of his uniform, and his star of the Bath, and looked him intently in the face when he spoke; as there is nothing so attractive to elderly persons as the *abandon* and *prévenance* of children, he pronounced me the nicest child that ever was seen; saying, as he kissed and patted my cheek for the twentieth time:

"Well, upon my word, I think I have got the nicest little niece that ever was seen."

"And I'm sure I've got the nicest big uncle that ever was seen," was my reply; which riveted the affection with which I had already inspired this dear, kind, and most unselfish of created beings,—the only one whom I have ever known who was really

"In wit a man, and in simplicity a child."

But there are natures (few and rare it is true) so loftily noble, so unsulliedly pure, so broadly generous, and so uncorruptibly conscientious, that to praise seems almost to profane; their own deeds being alone worthy to constitute their panegyric, and embalm their names to the latest posterity; and such was my Grand-uncle Paulett. Let him then speak for himself, as this narrative progresses, in those manifold series of good Samaritan actions which never belied the deep, pure source from whence they flowed. I may be pardoned

for thus dwelling upon them, in consideration of not only the man, but the type being extinct. We now live in an age of equality and retrenchment! and verily their Dead Sea fruits, plausible to the eye, but bitter and hollow within, are visible in all things; for almost every mind of the present day, with the few exceptions that prove the rule, seems to have been retrenched within the narrowest possible bounds, and both private and public aims and ends appear to be all equally low.

Formerly *honour* was the idol men died to obtain, and women to preserve. Now, it is money to which they have transferred their devotions, and for which they are ready to sacrifice their lives. But it is the law nature binds, and therefore we can't sever it; that from all evil states to good ones, both in the moral and physical world, there must be a state of transition; and in either this intermediate state is trying, chaotic, and disheartening to the greatest degree. In this state we now are, and therefore must only unselfishly console ourselves with the good that will come, and is rapidly progressing, out of this maze of false positions in which society is at present placed, and which would be truly insupportable did one not religiously believe that finally in all things "out of evil cometh good," just as out of the hideous confusion of chaos God created the immutable order and beauty of the material world. So, in like manner, out of this terrible and monstrous confusion of our social system shall ultimate har-

mony and happiness issue; only, alas! in the moral world.

The finale is long, very long, ere it can be brought about; whereas, in the material world, Omniscience simply *willed* the creation, and it *was*. But it appears to be His pleasure to leisurely and elaborately work out the completion, that is the perfection, of the moral and spiritual world; and even in small things, mankind like a rivulet of running water, reflect the great shadow of this slowly and mysteriously revolving axis of eternity, which for ever through evil, filtres good, and through wrong, wrings right.

But to return to my aunts, whose patience would have been sorely tried (had they possessed any, which luckily they did not), had I kept them in reality as long waiting on the deck as I have done in this last page, to say nothing of the injury to their complexions, and the detriment to their silks and satins, single flounced as they were, to contend against the insidious league of the sun and the sea-air combined. However, luckily they were not subjected to any trials of the kind, for my Uncle Paulett, after having condoled with them as feelingly upon the perils and dangers they had braved the first night of their voyage, as if it had not been their own fault, and to the great damage of his yacht, handed my Aunt Marley down the companion-ladder, and up the pier steps, gallantly giving her a *réchauffé* of Turgot's compliment to Marie Antoinette, saying, as he glanced at her verdant feet,

"Madame l'univers (*l'uni vert*) est à vos pieds!" which my Aunt Marley, judging from his manner that he was paying her a high-flown compliment, only felt the more flattered at, from not understanding it; (a plan that ladies in general, by the bye, would do well to adopt as a rule). One of the sailors in his zeal for my Aunt Bell's safety, in saying: "You'd best go down the ladder backkards, Marm;" and, pointing to it with his pipe, nearly poked the latter in her eye.

My Uncle Charles, dreading from the anger that flashed from his favourite sister's brilliant orbs, that this *contre-temps* would not end in smoke, with great presence of mind seized that opportunity of purloining the coalheaver's compliment to the Duchess of Devonshire, and said: "Never mind, Bell, he only wanted to light his pipe at your eyes." Whether from a feeling of aristocratic exclusiveness that she did not choose to furnish any such obliging accommodation to a common sailor, or that accidents will sometimes happen even to the best regulated of all fires—vestal ones—I know not; but certain it is, the fire in my aunt's eyes was at this speech miraculously and suddenly extinguished, and she even smiled and showed her peculiarly fine teeth, without, however, their in the least looking as if she could not bite.

This good humour was increased by an affected fear on her part, which caused her on arriving at it to suspend one of her *Cendrillon* feet over the boat, as if afraid to jump into it, a manœuvre that amply suc-

ceeded, as four pair of eyes—two of which were respectable, and two decidedly handsome—were immediately riveted upon it. The four respectable eyes were the joint property of Mr. Andrew Waltham, the secretary, and Major Macdonald, the brigade-major; the handsome ones belonging to Lord Frederick Farnham, and Captain Dapperwit, the two aides-de-camp.

At length we were all safely landed, when my Grand-uncle Paulett again affectionately welcomed us, a few more compliments—(allusions to Venus rising from the sea, without any specific reference, however, to the particulars of her appearance on that occasion)—constituted part of the ceremony of my aunts being handed into the carriage. After which, each member of the staff who had drawn up their horses abreast, and were waiting *chapeau bas* for that honour, was duly presented to them, Sir George saying, as he exchanged the names of the two aides-de-camp:

"Now, gentlemen, I have nothing more to do with you: I make you over entirely to the ladies, and, if you are guilty of any sins of omission, or of commission, they it is who must bring you to a court-martial."

"Take care it's not a court-partial," laughed my Uncle Charles, which sally made his sisters ashamed of him, and set them blushing; while he, before he sprang into his saddle, said:

"Farnham, my boy, how are you? Dapperwit, my

fine fellow, how goes the world with you?" cordially shaking hands with each of them the while; and then, taking his horse from the dragoon, in another moment he was mounted, and the carriage with my two aunts proceeded, followed by Lord Frederick and Captain Dapperwit, who rode on either side of it; my Grand-uncle Paulett, and my Uncle Charles, with the rest of the cavalcade, remaining behind to see us off. Sir George took me up in his arms, and just as he was going to lift me into the carriage, a thin, wizen, sharp-looking, little old man, with keen but sunken dark eyes, grizzled hair, a shabby hat, and still shabbier blue threadbare frock coat, pepper-and-salt trousers, unstrapped, and barely meeting a pair of unpolished highlows, displaying a pair of grey worsted stockings, with a white muslin cravat, which looked as if it had undergone a course of camomile tea for its health, wisped round his throat, old shabby beaver gloves, and a thick bamboo stick, on which he had been resting his chin, and watching our landing, now took off his hat, when my Grand-uncle Paulett turned round, and, shaking hands with him, said:

"Ah! how d'ye do, Belzoni? How is my little friend, Bloom?"

"As blooming as ever—as blooming as ever, my goot Sare George," replied the old man, with a bitter laugh.

"Poor child!" murmured Sir George; and then added aloud, patting my cheek: "You don't deal in

pickles, I believe, Belzoni, or I'd ask you what you'd give me for this one."

"Ah! my goot Sare George, you know I can't afford to buy noting precious now, since I lose my fortune, and am only poor old Belzoni de beggare."

"Nonsense, Belzoni; no man is a beggar as long as, like you, he possesses a dutiful and affectionate child, and even one sincere friend; and that *I* can answer for you having, if not many more."

"No, my good Sare, not many; for dere are not many Sare George Paulett in de world."

"*Raison de plus* then why you should come and see him oftener; and at all events let Bloom come, and play with my little nieces here."

"Got bless you, goot man, Got bless you," said the old man, moving rapidly away, without returning any direct answer to the invitation; after which, my uncle lifted Grace and me into the carriage, and then said something in Irish to Nelly, which had such an effect upon her, that I thought she would never stop curtseying, clasping her hands, and lifting up her eyes to Heaven as if she was praying, while my uncles both laughed; but when my Grand-uncle Paulett held out his hand to help her into the carriage, with as much *politesse* as if she had been a duchess, it threw her into such a paroxysm of curtseying, gratitude, and wonder, that I thought she never would come to, and only did so at last to utter the remonstrance of—

"Oh, no, indade, Sur George, I cudn't; it's too

great an honour entirely for de loikes o' me;" and, resolutely drawing back, she was fain to accept the legitimate assistance of Mole, the footman; when the door at length closed upon us, and in another quarter of an hour we alighted at the Palladian portico of the Government House, where, if possible, Nelly appeared even more awed at the array of powdered footmen in their white liveries, blue facings, and silver shoulder-knots, blue plush continuations, and immaculate silk stockings, as unwrinkled as "eternal youth," than she had been at the good breeding of my Uncle Paulett. These gentry did not produce the slightest effect upon me or Grace, and I doubt even whether the size of the house and the splendour of its appointments did; but accustomed as we had been to the "most admired disorder" of the drawing-room at Castle Sedley, the *pêle-mêle* confusion of our own nursery, and the rack-rent topsy-turvy of the whole house, the intense neatness and order that now surrounded us; the large, well, not to say elegantly-furnished rooms, that were allotted to us; the two silent and respectful English maids that waited upon us, only addressing us in an under-voice; their difficultly suppressed smiles, when Nelly addressed them as "Ma'am;" and finally, Mrs. Stillingfleet, the housekeeper, curtseying herself into the room in all the propriety of black silk, and the purity of white muslin, to know "if the young ladies wanted anything?" were too much for our weak nerves. We felt a sort of grandeur of desolation steal over us, and

simultaneously bursting into tears, we hid our faces against Nelly's arm, and almost for the first time thinking of our father, during the excitement of the journey, we sobbed out an inquiry of "When *he* was to come?"

Nelly hushed us in a whisper, for she had not courage to speak out before the fine caps and fashionably-made gowns of the two maids; and even when they at length took their departure, the sofas, hangings, carpets, and wardrobes, seemed to awe her down to a *pianissimo* tone, which, had she been in Parliament, would have rendered her "inaudible in the gallery;" and which so completely wearied, not to say appalled me, that at length, in utter despair at this death-like silence, I boldly walked over to the window which looked upon the lawn, and, clambering up upon the window-seat, knocked my hand through one of the panes, thinking that Nelly would never tamely submit to this, but would shriek out one of her usual reprimands and anathemas against my "unbelaveable bouldness," winding up with the standard anecdote of her son Dermot, which she used always to repeat on such occasions, and which was to this effect,—that when the said Dermot was about four years old, he rejoiced in "the fatal gift of beauty," but added to it so many impish propensities to mischief, that his wise mother had instructed him, whenever either friends or strangers praised his appearance, invariably

to reply to their encomiums, "I *am* a fine boy, but I'm *ex*thramely bould."

But for once I reckoned without my host, for Nelly neither raved nor scolded; on the contrary, she sank into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears; and when really sorry to see the result of my *ruse*, I ran over to her, and asked "what was the matter?" she said in a voice almost inarticulate:

"Oh, Miss Miriam! Miss Miriam! If I hadn't sin (seen) it with my own two ill-used, and much desaved eyes, I'd niver have b'laved that it was in you to go and breake the windeys, and demolish the house of the good, kind man, that recaved you for all the world like a young quane in it. Och! weresthrew! weresthrew! for all the sun's so bright, it's the dark day to me."

Now that my iniquities were placed before me in this strong light (through the broken pane!), I could not do less than bewail them as bitterly as Nelly herself; and, therefore, without loss of time, burst into such a roar as I had not executed since I left Ireland, protesting between the *fioriture* of each sob and howl that I loved my good Uncle Paulett with my whole heart, and would not for the world demolish his house, or ever again even break one of his windows. But still Nelly shook her head with the obstinacy of confirmed scepticism, till Grace came to my assistance,

saying, she was sure I had not done it on purpose.

"Oh yes, I did; but indeed, indeed, I did not think about its being Uncle Paulett's window."

"Listen to dat, now, Miss Sedley, and grant me patience! she owns dat she did it on purpose! Oh! murder, murder! but dat makes it worse."

"No it don't, Nelly," said Grace; "for she's told the truth about it. But why did you do it on purpose, Mirry?"

"Not to spoil Uncle Paulett's window—indeed it wasn't; but quite for another reason."

"But what other reason?"

"Why, because—because—it was all so big, and so still, and so stupid here, that I wanted to do something that would make a noise, and amuse us; that was all."

"All! and enough, too. Faix, Miss Miriam, you are a nice sort of a young lady to come into a fine, grand, gintleman's house, and before you've set your fut in it five minutes, go convarting his windeys into musical glasses, for your own divarsion; for I'm sure it aint for anybody's else's!"

Luckily for me, a knock now was heard at the door, and Nelly rose to answer it: it was one of the footmen to announce to us that our dinner was ready; and preceding us, he showed us the way to one of the three rooms dedicated to our use. This suite consisted of a nursery, school, and dining-room, all equally

large and lofty: but we had no sooner arrived at the latter, than poor Nelly found fresh dilemmas and embarrassments awaiting her. Monsieur Vatel, the *chef*, (who, by the bye, boasted with pardonable pride, that he was the *arrière petit fils* of the illustrious *artiste* of the *grand monarque*, that odd fish who had committed suicide upon the non-arrival of a turbot; and his descendant, was, moreover, on the mother's side, related to the almost equally illustrious Weltjie, the Prince of Wales's *chef*,) a perfect *cordon bleu*; and had, to *fêté* our arrival, sent up a most *recherché* little dinner, and what he considered a most simple one; namely, a *consommé à la Condé aux quenouillettes de poulet*, some *épigrammes d'agneau*, and a roast chicken. But Nelly, whose ideas of soup for a nursery-dinner, did not extend beyond mutton broth and beef-tea, and only reached up to the old established white, gravy, and mock-turtle, for the consumption of adults, looked with a suspicious eye upon the poor innocent *quenouillettes*, and whispered us not to eat them, as she b'laved they were made of putty—her reason for which belief she confessed at a future period was, the cook being a Frenchman; and "she knew thim French ate anything, from frogs down to falsehoods." The *épigrammes d'agneau* were also proscribed, and even the chicken did not escape a suspicious look from her, on account of its water-cress *rus in urbe*; but she had no sooner began to cut up my dinner for me,

than with an effort of desperation, she did muster courage to say to the formidable footman :

"If you plase, Sir, I'll trouble you for a chaney plete; the silver does be squakeing so," which so completely routed the gravity of Mr. Mole, that he was obliged to make a precipitate retreat to the door before he could comply with her request; but strange to say, though he had bolted he still got the plate; nor did his trials end there, as we were destined further to expose our ignorance, for Nelly's *début* in "high life" was not more happy than mine had been in "the musical glasses;" and, as we were evidently in a vein of ill-luck, I am convinced we should not have fared a bit better had we attempted "Shakspeare," for our next flounder was in "taste;" as upon a *Charlotte Russe* making its appearance, and Nelly's helping us to some of it sparingly enough from her fear of the unknown, I had no sooner conveyed it to my mouth than I let my spoon fall, exclaiming with a terrible face that all my teeth were aching, and begging Nelly to taste it, which she did; and again turning to Mole, she said:

"I am sorry to be throubling you, Sir, but would you be so good as to tell the cook not to send up any more shnow puddings, as the young ladies is not used to dem, though indade de shnow here seems very nice; and it's a wonder where they get it, and de weather so warum (warm) and bright, and it only de beginning of October."

This completely finished the greatly-amused Mole, who was glad to make the snow-pudding the medium of his escape; so removing it, he left the room; and us resting on our oars, as unwatched children at their meals are apt to do, that is, gracefully leaning forward against the table, our elbows on it, and our shoulders up to our ears, knocking with a sort of castanet measure the backs of our spoons against our lips. In all these little social graces, we were now indulging *ad libitum*, and unreprimanded; for Nelly was looking round the room, and indulging in the following soliloquy, in which she was almost overheard by her *bête noire*, the tall footman, when he returned with a *macédoine* and some cheese-cakes that were much more to our taste.

"Oh! to be sure it's all mighty grand, but it's mighty quare, and thim fine sarvants is worse to me nor all de quality; for one knows what *dat* manes, but how I'm ever to sit down, and ate and drink, and make fray (free) wid dese fine sirs and madams, is more den I know."

We so far participated in Nelly's feelings, that it was a great relief to us when the old shawl containing carts, horses, dolls, and crocodiles, was untied previously to Nelly's going down to her dinner, and spread on the floor, for my inspection, with an injunction that I would "be a good child, and stay quite till she came back." I hate self-praise nearly as much as self-righteousness, but still I must say, that could the

reader have beheld Miss Wapsey at this stage of her travels, however cuirassed in the *nil admirari* he might be, he must have acknowledged that it was a fine trait in my character that I should continue to evince towards her such unabated devotion, "let her loveliness fade as it would," and one, which the mere "manly heart with love overflowing" (?) as some war song has it, would be quite incapable of comprehending. This first day at ———— was a failure, as far as the extreme happiness we had anticipated went.

After Nelly's dinner, we walked out about the grounds, which were both beautifully laid out and beautifully situated; commanding here and there, through vistas of the luxuriant foliage, *échappés* of "the dark blue sea" beyond, while from the peristyle of a charming summer-house fitted up after the model of a Pompeian House, to which one ascended by a circular exterior flight of some eighty marble steps, the balustrade of which were green bronze acanthus leaves, intersected with gilt Roman battle-axes. This *Bel Retiro*, or rather *Bellos Guardos*, as it was called, commanded a most extensive and magnificent view of the sea; its furniture was only classical in form, for nothing could exceed the luxurious comfort of the cushions and squabs of its couches, and small Persian carpets counteracted the chilling effects of its mosaic floor, containing the *obligato* 'Black Dog,' and *Cave Canem* in the centre.

Outside each window, instead of *jalousies*, or Venetian blinds, were gilded lattice-work, which could be put back at pleasure. The subject of the fresco on the walls, was the interior of a Lybian temple, with the priests and priestesses in the act of celebrating the rites of Neptune, while devotees were bringing cornucopias of pearl, coral and gold to lay upon the altar. The curtains of this room were of Tyrian purple silk, but of the *real* Tyrian purple, which is a deep orange-red, and they were trimmed with a key border, of royal purple. From the centre of the room was suspended a large bronze Roman galley lamp, and when lit, a flame issued from each oar; while in the corners of the room stood bronze tripod lamps, about five feet high. There was no fireplace, but in lieu of it a most beautiful antique brazier.

We continued our walk, but with the slowness and solemnity of a procession, as the lawns looked so like velvet, and the gravel walks so like print, that we did not yet like to take the liberty of running on them; however, familiarity soon ensued, and with it the concomitant contempt prophesied by the copy-books; for in a week we treated them with no more respect than if they had been so many specimens of Irish bog. But upon this difficulty got over *first day;* we were not sorry when the walk was ended, and we returned to our bread and milk, that natural element of childhood, till it is exchanged for the milk and water, in which some young ladies, and indeed "*British females!*" in general

delight to float. However, this calm and natural state of things was not destined to last, for the eternal Mole, whom Nelly would not have minded so much had he had the tact to be blind like other moles, but he had not, as the man not only possessed two great staring eyes, but actually *showed* that he stared with them more than usual at all that she said and did.

He now came to say that we were to go down to dessert, upon which ensued a hasty rummage for the second white frocks of our *trousseau*, which could boast no other merit over those we had on, than the one of not being tumbled; and as Nelly, with that quick womanly perception which she possessed in a pre-eminent degree, instantly perceived how little our costume tallied with the luxury by which we were now surrounded, she grew cross, and began muttering that "it was a sin and a shame, so it was, to bring the poor childer to a place that had such fine ways wid it, and not give them a dacent stitch to put on; it's long before Mrs. Marley, and Miss Paulett would go and make such an Adam and Ave in Paradise figure of themselves, as they did of dese poor orphan childer. Bad luck to it, for a world, but it would take a dale of good scourging before iver it would be brought to behave itself properly to man, woman, or child." Here the string of the old frock, which being tender itself, should have been treated more tenderly by others, was tied with such a jerk, that it broke, and another had to be

run in in its stead, which did not add to the good-humour of Nelly, who indeed was so thoroughly put out, that the whole order of our toilet had been reversed, for instead of washing our hands and faces first, she had forgotten that necessary preliminary till the frocks were on, when she had to tie a towel round our necks, as if we were going to be shaved.

This similitude was still further increased by Nelly in an absent fit soaping a sponge, and rubbing it round and round our faces, or at least round mine, till eyes, nose, and mouth, were alike saturated with suds; and most absent she must have been, for if there was any one thing on earth that poor Nelly was proud of, it was our skins and complexions, which she was wont to declare no other country but Ireland could have produced, and which she used to take as much care of as if they had really been what she called them—so much white satin; however, I should forgive her for this solitary, lavatory barbarity, (which most children in "The War," were daily subjected to,) as no doubt it was the only means she had within reach of making us smart, and in that, as far as our luckless eyes and cheeks went, she had fully succeeded. But a re-ablution of pure cold water in some degree allayed the pain, and enabled us at last to descend.

Nelly accompanied us as far as the dining-room door, and so dazzled was she at the view of the gold plate on the sideboard as it opened, that she exclaimed

as she retreated into the hall: "Oh! murder, look at dat now for goold and silver; sure St. Pather's at Rome can't have more, or de Pope himself can't be grander."

Grace, as usual, walked over to my Aunt Marley, but I wanted no second invitation to go at once to my Grand-uncle Paulett, who possessed that rare talent which might be called *l'esprit du cœur*, the talent of making himself quite as agreeable to children as he was to the wisest and most learned, by the solidity and breadth of his mind, the playful brilliancy of his wit, and the perfect encyclopædia of biography and anecdote, with which his own extensive intercourse with men and things, aided by his quick tact and observation, had stored his most retentive memory; for to listen to his conversation, was like living over again in an easy-chair the most agreeable portions of the lives of the most agreeable people, with all the angles rounded, and the dross, which *will* alloy even the most brilliant lives, sifted from them; for he had skimmed the cream of the greater portion of his distinguished contemporaries, and had even seen the setting suns of Burke, Goldsmith, and Johnson, whose glorious rays had not rested upon him in vain.

> "For e'en as the tenderness that hour instils,
> When summer's day declines along the hills;
> So feels the fulness of the heart and eyes,
> When all of genius that *can* perish dies!"

And this tenderness and fulness of heart, seemed to

have penetrated into, and hallowed his whole nature, truly making "to the pure, all things pure;" for although he had been private secretary to George IV. when Prince of Wales, and had, with Sheridan, often "set the table in a roar," yet had he come out of this contaminating ordeal uninfected, save by the perfect manners of the one, and the exquisite wit of the other. But I am again anticipating. A new member of the house of Paulett now appeared on the horizon, a Sir Joseph Paulett, Knight of the Crescent, and of some Spanish order, for the Pauletts, like divers others in the *War*, were a most *be(k)nighted* family.

Joseph happened, in falling to the lot of this personage, to be one of those *mauvaise plaisanterie* sort of names, with which chance sometimes delights in caricaturing nature, by giving it an antipodical label, such as calling a coquette Constance; a philanthropist Dionysius; and this cousin of mine Joseph, who had had innumerable portraits perpetrated of himself in Spain, and mezzotintos therefrom, under the title of Don José Paulett, upon which every one suggested that it should have been Don Juan, except his wife, who was quite content to look upon him as a Joseph. Spain was his hobby; guerillas, empecinados, and contrabandistas, his chief talk; and though his name seldom, if ever, figured in the bulletins of the day, innumerable gold Spanish buttons flourished in his waistcoats, and every man in the Peninsula was unanimous in doing him the justice to acknowledge, that he

had taken a great many—pictures, at the siege of Saragossa, and what is better still, had kept them afterwards.

A most disagreeable personage was this said Sir Joseph Paulett, or Don José, as it pleased him to be styled, uniting the charming qualities of tyrant, toady, and tuft-hunter; and such a boaster, in all that either he or his immediate family were concerned, that in the army he had acquired the sobriquet of the *Bragadier*. He had an aquiline, but exceedingly crooked nose, which my aunts, who detested him, used to call his *bar sinister*, for there were certain scandalous chronicles in the family, which stated that his mother had been an opera-dancer, a Signora Fiametta, who, through some inadvertence, had not been married to my Grand-uncle till two years after their son, Don José's, birth. Be this as it might, the exceeding arrogance of this gentleman caused this little informality in his mode of entering into the family to be raked up among his relatives, oftener, perhaps, than it otherwise would have been. *Mais il ne perdait jamais la carte*, as the French say, for his first move on the chess-board of life, was to marry a woman with money, the daughter and sister of an old Cornish baronet, a Sir Christopher Crankie.

She was a good sort of woman enough, only, like all the Crankies, a little, or rather not a little, stingy, which was a providential balance to the extreme lavishness of the Pauletts; but still she got on very well

with them, being one of these negative characters which, like water, amalgamate well with most things. She was, moreover, passively good-natured, and had no confirmed habit, except that of an annual *accouchement*; but, as Englishwomen seldom evince their good breeding in any other way, it is perhaps invidious to recur to poor Lady Paulett's "domestic manners." She was for the time being in England; for Sir Joseph was one of those men who always leave their wives somewhere, of course only on account of its not being safe to travel about with one's valuables; but he invariably sealed his letters to her with a brace of birds, I believe a gull and a hawk, tied together, but flying different ways, with the consolatory motto of:

"The further we fly, the tighter we tie."

This was certainly better than drawing the cord too tight at home. However, he was shortly to return to Spain, and then Dosey, (query, *dose?*) as he called his wife, her name being Theodosia, was, with her three sons and daughter, the last of whom was called, not perhaps in the best taste in the world, Fiametta, were to come to——. In continuation, Don José had very large prominent blue eyes, *à fleur de tête*; very straight brown hair, which, nevertheless, was diurnally twisted into one solitary curl on the centre of his forehead, an evident copy from the fore-lock of Time; on each little finger he wore a multiplicity of rings, one large, legitimate-

looking, masculine turquoise, and sardonyx, but all the others, evidently fragile female gauds, proclaiming their own *sous entendu*. Round his throat he also wore a very slender, almost impalpable, short Venetian chain, not longer than a dog-collar, to which was attached a little covey of small, heart-shaped lockets, containing hair; and as there was generally something wrong, either with his collar, or black neck-handkerchief, which required arranging, these precious relics on the shrine of his vanity, were, in settling the former, sure to be, accidentally on purpose, displayed for a couple of seconds to public view, quite long enough to assure the most sceptical of their existence.

It must not, however, be inferred from this, that there was anything sentimental about Don José; oh, dear, no! far from it; for, as he carried off the pictures from Saragossa, so, in like manner, were all his other conquests effected, by a *coup-de-main*, and all his *bijouterie* and souvenir trophies, seemed to bear the hall mark of *contrabandisto*, in indelible characters. Such was his mania for ordering and commanding—a habit no doubt contracted from his military career—that he could not enter any house, even for the first time, and while the owners were strangers to him, without finding fault with everything, and either announcing in the aggregate that everything was in bad taste, or analyzing that opinion by asserting that what was here should be there, in short, that everything required to be elsewhere, and that even what was right

ought to be left, till the miserable host, or hostess, began to feel that nothing indeed would be *right* till he *left*.

From the very first day of our arrival, it was evident that he considered us as interlopers, and between him and my aunts there sprang up, once and for ever, that cordiality and sincerity of hatred, having jealousy for its foundation, and suspicion for its summit, which never flourishes in such perfection as amongst relations, and which is not the less fully appreciated on both sides from being unexpressed on either. To do Don José justice, no one possessed the art of condensing more disagreeable sayings and doings into a small compass, and a short space of time, than he did; and he soon gave me "a taste of his quality," for hooking me over to him through the bait of a nectarine: he commenced our acquaintance by asking me, "if I had been to the coachmaker's to get my face varnished." The colloquial literature of our language not having yet been enriched with that polite inquiry of "how are you off for soap?" the poverty of the mother tongue at that time did not enable him to pose the query more tersely, he was therefore compelled to empanel me before a coachmaker, in order to break me a little on the wheel of his inquisitorial fiat.

He next proceeded to a few practical *facetiæ*, such as knocking me under the chin, and making me bite my own tongue; showing me London, which con-

sisted in lifting me up by the head, and nearly dislocating my neck, and finally by giving me some wine; and, while I was drinking it, bobbing my nose down into the glass, which, causing the wine to go the wrong way, nearly choked me. This so exasperated me, that I took that opportunity of practically illustrating the proverb of *in vino veritas* by telling him that he was the ugliest and most disagreeable man I had ever seen in my life. Whereupon a laugh ran round the table, and my Aunt Bell, with a seraphic smile of the most Christian forgiveness, called me over to her to tell me that it was very wrong of me to say such rude things; and to convince me how much more befitting mildness and sweetness were to a young person of my sex, helped me to a *meringue à la crême*, a reprimand which I had not the slightest difficulty in swallowing, but which however I had no sooner done, than I again manifested my ready zeal to become a martyr in the cause of truth; for, pointing across the table at Don José, I heroically exclaimed:

"But he is though, horribly disagreeable, and horribly ugly."

This was the signal for my aunts to return to the drawing-room, and, till the dining-room door had closed upon us, Bell kept her hand upon my mouth, affecting to be shocked at the terrible things that had issued from it. Lord Frederick Farnham, however, as he got

up to open the door, patted my shoulder, and said, *sotto voce:*

"There's a good little girl; always tell the truth."

And my aunts, wisely and judiciously, as they did everything, appealed to each other before me on our way up stairs, asking, "If anything could have been better, or more *à propos*, than my attack upon that detestable, impertinent, and overbearing Sir Joseph."

Even my Aunt Marley kissed me almost affectionately, when Nelly came to the door for us to go to bed, while my Aunt Bell called out after me:

"Mirry, darling, you need not get up before nine to-morrow, if you don't like."

Notwithstanding the novelty and excitement of the last twelve hours, and even of my *succès de société* at Don José's expense, the pleasantest part of the day was its end, when we knelt down to say our prayers, Nelly not forgetting a short sermon about the broken window; and even although it had been announced to us that we were to enjoy another whole month's idleness, for at the end of that time a French governess, who had been engaged for us, was to arrive from London, yet even the recollection of this month of liberty and pleasure, that is, of sight-seeing, could not make us feel as happy as it ought to have done. Why was this? All around us was better, and brighter, and gayer, than anything we had been ac-

customed to; but as yet it was also strange and unfamiliar. And habit being the harmony of existence, even when we miss *one* of its tones from the register of our lives, all the others jar.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE all sorts of reviews, sham-fights, (and very sham they must have appeared after the real ones they were accustomed to at home), races and regattas were got up in honour of my aunts, we had our own society, and *réunions* in consequence, having been duly introduced to two Miss Abrahams, and twelve Miss O'Donnells, and their four brothers. Their father, an excellent worthy man as could possibly be, was my Uncle Paulett's family physician. He was Irish by birth, and had studied medicine at Paris, before *the* French revolution, I mean the grandmother of all the little Revolutions of the present day—the wicked old lady of 1790, when precipitately returning to England, he had eventually settled at ——, where he had got into extensive practice, and married an amiable woman, the result of which marriage had been, what in the

War was denominated a fine family; which, like Smollett's continuation of Hume, greatly exceeded the original edition, as the worthy doctor himself was only one of six. They were an amiable, united, and thoroughly well-brought up family; what I mean by that is, their hearts were cultivated, and their dispositions educated—that only real education, or at least the only profitable one. Neither were external accomplishments neglected; for the eldest daughter, a very pretty and interesting girl of thirteen, who with her brother, a lad of fifteen, had had the very best masters, by which they had duly benefited, and saved their parents future expense, by teaching their younger brothers and sisters; so that this obligation conferred and received, was an additional bond of unity and affection between them. I don't think my aunts were half as well off in point of society, for the society of all small places being of necessity detestable, because in them we come too near the coarse, daubing, and glaring defects of the scenes of the world's minor theatres, whose actors, too, are more clumsy, and generally either "tear" their "passions to tatters," or else "mouth" them down to the most inane mediocrity. Besides, little people in little places, are essentially *fussy*, attaching the most undue importance to the minutest trifles, and eternally intercepting with their queries, and their wonder, the most ordinary proceedings of their neighbours; till the luckless natures of a higher calibre, condemned to drag on

their existence among these Lilliputians, begin to feel, as no doubt a poor elephant would condemned to find no other employment for the colossal strength of its trunk than that of eternally picking up pins with it, and those minikin pins into the bargain, ——, too, possessed all the vulgarisms and gossippings of a garrison town. Vulgarity is a sort of social malaria, that won't let you escape its baneful effects, even though you should shut yourself up in your house, in the hope of avoiding it. Vulgar people, moreover, are always obtuse, so that the small shot of hints, nay, even the twelve-pounders of insult, glide as ineffectually over them as hailstones over an armadillo. And it is terrible to be fenced round with all the publicity and importance of royalty, without being endowed with its power, or raised to its height; but only to feel that one cannot wear blue to-day, or black to-morrow, without its exciting as great a commotion in the place, as the losing and finding of Miss Cripps's bag did in "Little Pedlington;" or that if you dine with Montague, and after that you should, through an impossibility, or any other trifling little impediment, refuse Capulet's "obliging invitation," the latter is ready to consign you to his family mausoleum, without benefit of clergy. There is, too, an adhesiveness about under-bred persons, which threatens to drive Burgundy pitch from the Pharmacopæia, and become patent for Indian postage stamps. Show them common civility in health, or common humanity in illness, and they immediately

"make you liable" for a "friendship," mortgaged with such restrictions and sacrifices, that even Orestes, or Achates, would prefer going through the court to submitting to them.

Among the society at ——, were two Miss Cookes, one tall with certainly handsome features, but so masculine that they were very appropriately framed in a perfect *Beard!* The other was short and dumpy, somewhat awry, and of that luxuriant kind of ugliness which looks as if it had run to seed from neglect. However, they were clever in their way, and possessed certain *talents de société*, which made them rather popular, though Lord Frederick Farnham had branded them with the sobriquet of the *man cook*, and the *plain cook*, which was too good for them ever to lose. They were more especially my Aunt Bell's companions, for she thought either of them a good foil for her own more feminine attractions, when she drove out in her curricle, which she did almost daily, as she piqued herself upon being an excellent whip; for she was what, during the *War*, was called a *dasher!* and the war dasher was the chrysalis of the fast young lady of the present day.

There was a Captain Cooke also, a brother of these nymphs, who being one of those undefined and epicine sort of personages, *qui ne tire pas à conséquence*, did admirably as a sort of Figaro for my aunt. Dapperwit, the other aid-de-camp, not to be outdone by Lord Frederick, had given it as his opinion that Captain

Cooke must have gone round the world for his sister Caroline's ugliness, and taken his sister Janet, with him to beard the bears at the Pole. My Aunt Marley, true to Fourier's system of *les atomes crochu*, also soon contrived to find a congenial eye to hook herself on to. A Lady Laura O'Shindy, a sister of Lord Clanfuddles, who late in life had married a Major O'Shindy, an Irish adventurer in the Commissariat, who finding his wife's small fortune closely tied up, and his brother-in-law not at all inclined to exercise any government influence he might possess in his favour, soon conveyed himself and his whiskers (the only property he could call his own), back to Spain, leaving his bride to give herself up to "General Philanthropy!" the mean wretch never even calling the said General to account for engrossing all his wife's time and affections (no attention, for one cannot give what one has not got), which was lucky, as it enabled Lady Laura and my Aunt Marley to talk universal benevolence by the acre. But it is not in the middle of a chapter that I can attempt a sketch of that great luminary of the age, Lady Laura O'Shindy, from the long-established fact, that her nose alone would require a whole one, as it went even greater lengths than her philosophy. I am in a hurry now, as my aunts have just driven away to a *fête champêtre*, at the other end of the island, and we are to drive to a place called Eagle's Cliff, where Belzoni the old man lives, with whom my Uncle Paulett, shook hands when we landed, to invite his

daughter, Bloom Belzoni, to come and spend the day with us, as all the O'Donnells are coming; but, before we go, we are to go into the library, as my Grand-uncle Paulett, wants to speak to us.

When we reached the library, Mrs. Stillingfleet was just about to leave it. Don José, who was always writing when he was not railing, was scribbling away for life and death at the table, but at the same time listening to, and looking at, everything; for his faculties were constructed upon the plan of a many-bladed penknife, with this difference in his favour, that though all were equally as sharp as the knives, he could use all his senses at the same time.

"Well, there's nothing else you think of that would be useful, or that they would like, eh, Mrs. Stillingfleet?"

"Nothing, Sir George."

"And I hope Fraser has put up the best grapes, and taken care the flowers are choice ones, for he is as stingy about his flowers as if every stem were a Scotchman, and every leaf a guinea."

"Oh yes, Sir, I've seen to them all myself, and they are all the very best."

"That's right; now off with you, my good lady, and see them put into the carriage."

And as he opened the door for her, he kissed us, and wished us good morning; and, lifting me up upon the library-table, said in his merry way, as he drew over a large cardboard box, out of which he took a beautiful

green and white ivory Indian work-box, in which all the implements were mounted in gold:

"Now, Mirry, I'm going to make an ambassador of you; do you know what that is?"

"Making a fool of one, I suppose?" said I, not liking to appear ignorant.

"Ha, ha, ha! not very wide of the mark; only it is sometimes *vice versâ*, and fools are made ambassadors!" laughed my uncle. But here perceiving that Grace was standing painfully embarrassed, under Don José's cold, searching, contemptuous glance, though his pen was still scratching away at railroad speed, Sir George lifted her also up, and seated her upon the table, and then said, affectionately smoothing her hair, under the before-mentioned raspberry tart, cambric muslin, Golgotha: "Now that Mirry has explained to *you* what stuff ambassadors and *chargé d'affaires* are made of, you understand, Grace, why I did not depute you to execute my commission; but I want you, for all that, to watch over my little volatile plenipotentiary here, to see that she don't commit any blunder from inadvertence, for I am sure it would not be from want of feeling. I must therefore warn you, that Bloom Belzoni, the little girl whom you are going to see, and whom I hope you will bring back with you, met with an accident when she was three years old, which has made her quite deformed; but she has a very sweet face, and still sweeter disposition; so be sure, Mirry, you do not make any remark, or ask her any questions

about her figure, for now you know all about it, and you would only hurt her feelings, and make her cry."

"Oh, I'm sure I'll take care and not do that," interrupted I.

"And," continued my uncle, with a deep sigh, "you must recollect never to ask her anything about her mother, especially before her father. She is dead, and the subject is too painful; besides, as a general rule, my dear children, there is nothing so ill-bred as asking questions; what people wish you to know, depend upon it they'll tell you; and what they don't, you only make yourself disagreeable by asking; for instance, I'm sure if such a thing *could* happen as that you had been naughty, Mirry—mind, I don't say that it could, I'm only supposing a case—and that I met you looking very doleful, and your face all blotted with tears, after asking you what was the matter, and you hesitated about telling me, you would not like me to press you,—now should you?"

"No," said I hanging my head, and growing scarlet, as I pulled my unhappy cambric muslin gloves, the fingers of which were already like funnels, open at the end. "But, though you don't ask me, I will tell you that I am very bold (Nelly's word for naughty) for that I broke a window yesterday."

"I'm very glad to hear it," said my good uncle, kissing me; "not glad to hear that you broke the window, but glad that you have told me of it of your

own accord; for though, of course, you would not be so wicked as to tell a lie, yet, as I did not ask you about it, you might have concealed the truth."

"Oh but," said Grace rather indignantly, "is not concealing the truth the same thing as telling a lie?"

"You are right, my good child, to a certain extent, that is concealing the truth about our own misdeeds is worse than telling a lie. It is acting one, which undermines the nature more, as many lies must be both told and implied to act one; but to know of other people's wrong doings, and be silent upon them is sometimes a virtue, though not always. But I am forgetting your commission; I wish you to be very kind and civil to old Belzoni. I hope, indeed, you will always be so to every one, but particularly to him; for he once rendered not only to me, but to the whole of our army, a signal service in Egypt; he was then in a position to do so, being enormously rich. Since that, poor fellow, he has lost all his fortune, and the world has gone wrong with him in every way; he is a converted Jew, but as he himself says, has not found as much Christianity among Christians as he used formerly among the Turks; but unfortunately in this world, wealth is the only thing that elicits the right and universal answer to the question of "Who is my neighbour?" Be rich, and all the world are willing to be your neighbours; or, even your father, or mother, were you not already provided with those first necessaries

of life; be poor, and those living next door don't know you, and I doubt if in searching the four quarters of the globe, whether you would be able to find such a *lusus naturæ* as even a second cousin, or a Welsh uncle.

"Always, my dear children, like people for what they are, not for what they have. On a selfish principle, this is best; for any day they may lose their money, but they can never lose their good qualities, if they once possess them; but even should they not lose their money, they are not likely to give any of it to you; for money is a thing of which people seem to think they never can (let it accumulate as it will) have too much, or even enough for themselves; whereas, the good qualities of others, you cannot come in contact with without benefitting directly or indirectly by them.

"But when people are down in the world, it is quite as bad to appear to patronize them, as it is to neglect them; indeed worse to a proud spirit, for the very sensitiveness, which makes them more susceptible to insult, enables them better to suffice to themselves, and to reject even kindness that has not delicacy for its companion. So mind, Mirry, that you try and treat poor little Bloom exactly with the same sort of frank kindness that you treat your sister Grace, so as not to let her fancy that she is either a stranger, or a dependant; and give her this work-box with my love, and tell her I am a cunning old fellow, and always give an

apple where there is an orchard; and, as she marked one set of pocket-handkerchiefs so nicely for me, I shall soon expect her to do me another.

"My dear uncle," cried Don José, hastily folding the letter he had been writing, and putting it unsealed into his pocket as he walked over to the side of the table we were at, "if you will allow me to say so, I think that work-box much too good for a girl like Bloom Belzoni; and I think I should like to buy it, and send it to Dosey, if you will let me, and give Bloom a commoner one."

"You may get your wife one like it, if you please; for I have no doubt Du Barry has more of them," said my Uncle Paulett. Du Barry was the Howell and James of ——. "But," continued he, "you must excuse my sending a shabby one to poor little Bloom, for giving trumpery presents to those who are badly off I look upon as the worst species of bad taste, and bad feeling, for it is going out of one's way to remind them of their poverty. But it seems to me, that you are strangely altered, my dear Joseph," concluded my uncle, taking a pinch of snuff, and looking most ironically *naïve* at his nephew; "for at Cairo, you used to think nothing good enough for Belzoni; for even that magnificent Arab that poor Abercrombie gave me—Selim, don't you remember? you made me give him to Belzoni: and though Bloom was then only an infant, I recollect your borrowing a hundred sequins from me, to give her a gold cup,—

by the bye, my dear Joseph, I do not so clearly recollect whether you ever repaid them ?"

Don José bit his lip, slightly shrugged his shoulders, as though he should say, "what a pity my poor uncle is such a fool;" or it might mean, "what a pity it is that he cannot rest satisfied with being a fool to his nephews and nieces;" or, as "brevity is the soul of wit," it may have meant, "why can't he confine his *donna mania* to his nephew Joseph ?" But, whatever were his thoughts, his words were:

"Why, my dear uncle, at that time Belzoni was the right arm of our troops in Egypt; and after his almost miraculous rescue of our convoy in the desert, I know it was Abercrombie's wish that every officer in the corps should evince their sense of Belzoni's services in the best way they could."

"And do you think, Joseph, that services—especially such services—rendered to human beings, are like frescoes on a whitened wall, which a little time and a few storms can obliterate? I don't, at all events I can never forget, that after the battle of Alexandria, a few hours before his death, as I was sitting beside him in his tent, poor Abercrombie said to me: 'Do you know, Paulett, I ought to have been your father, for I was in love with your mother for years: now that she is where all angels ought to be—in Heaven—I may tell you this; so fancy me your father, and attend to my dying injunction: Never forget the obligations we are under to Joel Belzoni; he is richer

than any of us, so that he don't want this world's good things; but sincerity of friendship is what the richest cannot purchase, so give it to him, George, and with it my blessing, which, with my sword, is all I have to leave you either.' Therefore, my dear Joseph," concluded my uncle, as the tears welled in his eyes, "you don't suppose I am likely to neglect Belzoni, or to send cheap insults to his child."

"Oh! very well, my dear uncle," said Don José, hastily buttoning his surtout, as he prepared to leave the room, "I'll get another work-box for Dosey at Du Barry's." And indeed, to do this *mari modèle*, justice, he made many liberal presents to his family from the same emporium; but somehow or other, through successive little oversights in his financial arrangements, all such invariably went down in my Uncle Paulett's account. When we reached the hall, Don José was still lingering there, putting on his gloves; and, as we crossed it, he made a snatch at the work-box I was carrying, saying:

"Just let me look at that, child."

But instead of complying with his request, I thought it my duty, after all I had heard, to refuse, and grasp it more tightly; which I did with a hasty "No, I can't," and a quick turn round to Nelly, against whom I leant the work-box as against a wall of defence; and, upon his attempting still to possess himself of it, I set up such a scream, that it brought my Uncle, Paulett, out of the library; whereupon Don José made

a precipitate retreat down the hall door steps into the lawn, merely saying by way of parting compliment:

"What a disagreeable little wretch it is!" To which Nelly muttered, as she followed, lifting me into the carriage:

"Och! din, its meself dat doesn't like a cross bone in your ugly schkin, and if it wasn't worse look (luck) dat Dermot rints de cabin and de bit of ground from ye, and dat de pig on dat account does be obleeged to look up to you as his natcherel (natural) purtector, its little shivility you'd get from Nelly Bawn, Sur Joseph Paulett, for all you tink yourself so grand wid your crooked nose, and straight hair, and your ninety-nine gross of rings sufficient to draw all de curtains dat ever was made, and lave enough afther to ring all de pigs' schnouts dat ever was born."

CHAPTER VI.

About an hour and a half's drive along an upper road, that overlooked the sea and the beach, through the exhilarating air of a fresh, crisp, autumnal breeze, brought us to Eagle's Cliff; and indeed it was well-named, for on a rock in a small creek, or bay, stood a solitary turret, or tower, of what appeared to have been formerly a castle, while the waves laved its basement, which contained one massively-grated, prison-looking window. The upper stories were gained by a flight of nearly four hundred granite steps, much broken and indented, but triumphing over their decay, like unto good deeds and fine thoughts which outlive the dead: here and there, through their crumbling fissures, burst luxuriant tufts of wall-flower, wild thyme, and pile-tary of the wall.

In order to arrive at this tower, it was necessary to

alight at the main road, and descend a few steps that led to the beach, from whence Eagle's Cliff was not above a hundred yards walk, but in bad weather, or at high tide, it could only be gained by a boat. Although on this, our first visit to it, the sea was particularly blue and calm, and the sun peculiarly bright, strange to say, Jeffs happened to be floating about round the little bay, like Robinson Crusoe, all by himself; not exactly upon a raft, but in a boat in which he was occasionally standing up and looking towards the road, as he pushed the skiff nearer the landing by resting an oar against the side of the rock that formed the foundation of the tower. While he executed this manœuvre, his tail (for in those days every government *employé* was tailed, and not *cur*-tailed, as they are now,) his tail, I say, with sympathetic ardour, elongated itself in horizontal rigidity in the opposite direction, as if scornfully pointing at a world upon which its owner turned his back.

"Oh! look Nelly," cried I, "there's Jeffs—"

"Well, and sure if it is, why would I luck (look) at him, Missh Miriam—or you aither (either). I suppose he's about his business, or if he isn't, let him go about it, and fair weader afther him; so walk on, Missh."

"But look, Nelly, he's getting out of the boat now, for he sees us."

"Whisht! now didn't I bid you walk quite and mannerly on, Missh Miriam; a purty ting indade, for

a young lady like you to be lucking (looking) afther boats and boatswains."

And so intent was she upon lecturing me, that she had quite forgotten to keep up an equally strict *surveillance* with regard to Grace, who now left to her own devices, turned round and said:

"Ah! how d'ye do, Jeffs?"

"Bravely, I thank you, Miss; hope you and all the family's quite well," replied Jeffs, hat in hand; and advancing a few steps after the flying Nelly (who, owing to the brown beaver bonnet, did not look as like Atalanta as she otherwise might have done,) he said, with a scrape of his right foot, and his hat held by the rims in both hands, as if he had been soliciting alms at a charity sermon, "yer servant, Mrs. Bawn; I thought praps as the young ladies might like to return by water, and as I've nothing particklar to do, I could wait for them."

"No nade in life of your giving yourself that throuble, Misther Jiffs, as I niver heard of any one's preferring the say to the dhry land, unlessh it was soals and shailors, maybe."

Poor Jeffs walked slowly away, looking much hurt, but whether at Nelly's curt refusal, or at her having given such particularly flat fish as *soals* the precedence of sailors I know not; but, touched with remorse for her ungraciousness by his blanks looks, Nelly turned round, and cried after him:

"You'll undershtand Mister Jiffs, if you plase, Sur, that we're very much obleeged to you all de shame (same).

Jeffs turned and paused an instant, as if endeavouring to understand it, but receiving no further explanation from Nelly, he seemed unable to do so; and therefore again continued his way leisurely and despondingly back to the boat, a sort of amphibious Othello, whose "occupation was gone;" while on the contrary ours was about to begin, and rather an arduous one it was, ascending those three hundred and eighty-two steps; and as Nelly was to carry the work-box, I suspect she repented her summary dismissal of Jeffs before we got half way, so closely does punishment follow on the steps of error; however, Nelly did seem to consider the matter in this light, as she merely remarked after having announced that "de back was dropping out of her;" that "it was long before men would ever be in de way when dey cud be of any use, but so it had bane since de world began, instead of being dere convanient to dhrive away de devil, like a man; sure Adam, de cowardly spalpeen, came up in time to go and tell on his wife, and lay all de blame on her (bad luck to him) whin she had taken a bite of de apple, dough I've no doubt he tuck (took) de biggest half, or he was very different to all de men he's left afther him, if he did not, as dey always take care to have de lion's share of any devarshin dat's

going; but whin it comes to paying de piper, it's de poor women dat's left to do it."

Arrived at length at a little garden, blooming and well cultivated, which brought us to the last story of the tower, and which, being several hundred feet above the level of the sea, commanded a most magnificent and boundless view, we stood still to admire and to take breath before we pulled the deer's foot attached to an iron chain at one end of a black-nailed Gothic door, the chief entrance of Belzoni's habitation. Not only the porch, but all this part of the turret, was completely covered with the finest and freshest broad-leaved ivy I ever saw; and with the little garden, filled with rare flowers and some exotics, gave an air of home and comfort to this naturally desolate and isolated spot that was a perfect triumph of cultivation. All round the wall overhanging the sea were green tubs, with orange, and lemon and pomegranate trees now in full bloom, the second they had put forth that year; the sea-breeze delightfully counteracting that voluptuous weight of atmospheric pressure which is so overpowering in Italy. We were still admiring this little world of enchantment, hanging as it were in the air like some impromptu fairy territory, when Nelly, clasping her hands, burst into the following soliloquy:

"Och! but it's dis dat would have bane de iligant place to show Terrence to Fader Abraham, rest his sowl!

(soul) all the same," and here she crossed herself devoutly.

"What do you mean, Nelly, by showing Terrence to Father Abraham? Wasn't Terrence your husband?" asked Grace, opening her eyes into wide notes of interrogation.

"He was, Missh, worse look (luck); but what I mane by showing him to Father Abraham is by raison of what Judy McManus—a mighty cute knowledgeable ooman—used to say to me, whin yare afther yare Terrence would be dead drunk, widout having de last notion of dying in ra-ality.

"'Nelly, 'ooman,' she used to say, 'de fact is, dat Father Abraham forgetting dat man of yours, and small wonder whin Terrence do be always forgetting himself; now sorrow a rid you'll iver git of him, unless you do someting to give Abraham a hint about him, to get his *buzzum* ready.'

"'How would I do dat, Judy?' says I.

"'Ye know de third big mountain out beyond Connamara, called de Divil's Gazabo?' says she.

"'I b'lave ye, Mrs. McManus,' says I.

"'Well,' says she, 'my advice to you is just to git Terrence to de top of it some day, and show him to Father Abraham, dats all, and lave de rest to Providence.'

"And I don't doubt but Judy was right, only it was six long miles to de Divil's Gazabo from our place, and dere was no such ting as iver getting Terrence to do a

hap'orth aither for his own good or mine, so deuce a fut would he go, and de consequence was, that I niver got shut (quit) of him for foore (four) year after Judy first let on to me about de Gazabo."

With this edifying little anecdote, Nelly re-pinned her shawl, with that air of retrospective resignation which is always both easy to achieve and graceful to assume when we allude to past misfortunes. And, pulling the deer's foot, "the prest" bell, not "watch," "returned a silver sound;" and in a few minutes an old woman, clean, but crabbed, answered our summons, when Nelly said:

"If you plase, Ma'am, does de gintleman wid de outlandish name be living here?"

The woman stared, as well she might, and seemed half inclined to resent an query, till Grace said:

"Is Mr. Belzoni at home? and if he is, will you have the goodness to tell him that we come from Sir George Paulett: but it's Miss Belzoni that we want to see."

The Cerberus, with a high-crowned cap, now seemed a little mollified and re-assured, but still she was by no means lavish of her civility; and eyeing us from head to foot, she merely said, in an execrable *patois*:

"Par daing restez-z; j'en vais voir."

Which we did not comprehend at the time, but understood by her pantomime of putting out her hand to defend the entrance, that we were to remain where we were till she had inquired whether we were to

be admitted. In a few seconds, Belzoni himself appeared, not in the old blue frock-coat, but in a Turkish dressing-gown and slippers, and an embroidered velvet *calotte* on his head, which, however, he immediately took off, and made us a series of profound bows; but Grace walked forward and shook hands with him, while I ran up and kissed him: the tears came into his eyes.

"Chère petite," said he, returning my kiss, and then added in broken English: "and how is my good Sare George?"

"He is quite well, thank you," replied Grace; "and said we were to give you his kindest regards, and ask you if you would allow your daughter to come and spend a few days with us?"

"Ah, she shall be ver happy; but I must tell you, my dear little girls, she has not de good fortune to be as pretty and as straight as you, so I am sure you will have—"

"Oh," interrupted Grace, colouring deeply, "Uncle Paulett told us all about her, and what a sweet face she has, and what a good girl she is, and that Mirry and I were to love her as if she was our sister."

"Dear soul! he never forgets any ting dat can save pain, or give pleasure," murmured Belzoni, passing his hand over his eyes; and then taking one of ours in each of his, he led us to the end of the narrow oak,

wainscoted passage we were in, when, throwing open a door, we found ourselves in a large circular room, the walls of which were covered with much-worn brown and gold arras. The floor was of polished oak, with a large but faded Turkey carpet in the centre; the high-backed Elizabethan chairs were also covered with leather, but sadly in want of repair. In the centre of this room, was an immense octagon oak-table, inlaid with quaint carvings, pourtraying scenes from the Commonwealth, amongst others, that of Cromwell suddenly entering, and finding his chaplain on his knees to Lady Claypole, who thus caught in the fact, said he was soliciting the hand of one of her women; whereupon Cromwell, naught deceived, grants his request, by ordering the woman to be brought in, and the marriage to be celebrated on the spot.

Instead of a claw, or legs, this curious old table was supported by the trunk and roots of an oak, polished, however, the branches of which, being in bold relief, spread out under the table, and with their acorns came up round the sides. In the recess of a deep mullion-window, which overlooked the sea, was another oak-table, but square, with four twisted legs, and over this one was a faded Persian carpet, on which rested some books, a round work-basket, full of plain work: and, at the opposite side, a small oval embroidery-frame, in a swing-stand, like that of a looking-glass, in which was a half-finished piece of white satin embroidery, and beside it,

a cup of the real old ruby glass, full of exquisite flowers, which had evidently been sitting for their pictures to the embroidery frame.

Round this window were cold, slanting, narrow window-seats, with cushions of faded red damask; the hangings which projected into the room, round this window, were of the same material, but in a still more dilapidated condition, the blinds of the high latticed windows being of a sort of purple bunting, such as flags are made of. Over the high carved mantel-piece, divided in the centre, in a triangular form, by the meeting of two carved palm-trees, was an old Venetian glass, from which the quicksilver had departed in several places, giving it a most variegated appearance; across it were placed two Turkish sabres, a yataghan, and a halo of costly, and curiously-mounted pistols; above these, again, were several *nargailés*, or pipes, slung straight across, like fowling-pieces.

Opposite the chimney-piece was a large old hard arras-covered couch, with another square oak table before it, upon which were placed two of the most exquisitely-beautiful shrubs I ever saw; one was of a bright and vivid purple, growing out of an immense shell, which had been so richly gilt, that it looked like a mass of solid gold; the other was growing out of the same sort of shell, only silvered over instead of gilt, and this plant had a most spray-like, feathery leaf, of pistachio green, with delicate maiden-blush-looking

flowers. As I could not help making an exclamation of admiration and delight before these floral marvels, Belzoni explained to us, that the beautiful purple flower was called the *Flor de Queresmo*, a shrub, which is a native of, and peculiar to Rio Janeiro; and, as for the shell in which it was planted, he had picked it up himself many years before, on the Sicilian coast, and therefore called it the *Concha d'oro*, which was the reason he had gilt it, that it might the better deserve its name.

The delicate shrub, in the silver shell, was an offshoot of that beautiful Chinese tree, the *yulan*. At one side of this sofa was a door, now ajar, which opened into a small room, containing an iron bedstead, a black leather covered office-table, with a range of small drawers and pigeon-holes, filled with parchments, and tape-tied papers, on one side of it, while against the wall was to be seen a large iron bureau, ribbed and nailed, with all sorts of curious and impregnable locks; the sort of chest, in fact, in which bankers keep papers and money. Belzoni now pushed-to this door, and crossing the room, opened one that stood opposite to it and said:

"Bloom, es-tu là? viens ici, Loulou, voir de petites amies; viens, vite, elles t'attendent."

"Toute suite, mon père," answered a very sweet voice from within.

A few minutes after, a young girl of about fourteen, with one shoulder so much higher than the other that she looked as if she had been stooping down on one

side to pick up something, entered the room; but though her figure had sustained this unfortunate injury, beauty was not to be banished from the home it had selected. Bloom Belzoni's face was almost as lovely a one as could haunt a poet's dream. A profusion of rich brown Titian-like hair was plainly wreathed in burnished masses round her classically-formed head, and parted on a forehead high and smooth, and of pearl-like whiteness, not concealing two ears so delicately white and small, that they looked as if they ought to have been kept in a casket. The low, straight, pencilled eyebrows, surmounted by large, almond-shaped, sleepy eyes, of that deep, soft, refracting, luminous, dark-green, so rare and so beautiful, that when, as in the case of Bloom Belzoni, it is fringed with long dark lashes, it reminds one of the sun piercing through forest foliage, or light playing at hide-and-seek with darkness. Her nose was small, and of the delicate chiselling and transparent tints of a cameo, blending into an upper lip and full red-budding mouth of perfect beauty, which did not quite close upon the small pearly, and slightly, very slightly projecting teeth within it. The face was of the most Madonna-like oval, pale, when in repose, but with every passing emotion mantling with downy peach-bloom tints, and stirred like some still lake with a passing breeze. The small, round, ivory throat was also worthy of the beautiful head and lovely face that surmounted it; a face which possessed in the fullest

degree what Napoleon, in one of his letters to Josephine, calls that *physionomie douce et mélodieuse*, which he complained of the Milanese beauties wanting, and which, adds he, tenderly, *est si bien gravée dans mon cœur !*—in short, Lord Byron's

"The mind, the music, breathing from the face!"

without which there is no beauty, and with which there can be no ugliness.

Bloom, who wore a white muslin frock and a black silk scarf, and who carried her plain straw bonnet in her hand, as if she had just come in, coloured when she saw us, and seemed labouring under the slight embarrassment which the consciousness of her deformity always occasioned her in the presence of strangers. But, as there are few better judges of beauty than children, and few upon whom it more powerfully exercises its autocratic privilege of attraction, we ran forward to meet her, and with the *sans gêne* of our age, told her in a very few words how beautiful we thought her. She returned our kisses in the most affectionate manner; but when I was again beginning to tell her, for the twentieth time, how beautiful I thought her, she put her hand over my mouth, and said:

"Hush, my dear little girl—no one can be beautiful—deformed as I am; however, it is God's will, and so I don't complain."

"I wish it was His will to make me like you, then,

for I think you are the prettiest girl I ever saw in my life," replied I, returning to the charge with true childish pertinacity.

"My dear child, you must not say such things," said Bloom, raising her beautiful eyes, now filled with tears, "you must not indeed; on the contrary, you ought to thank God that you are straight, and not an object to be pointed at."

What I most understood in this, was the tear in poor Bloom's eye; and, fearing I had done the very thing I had been cautioned against, and least meant to do, namely, hurt her feelings, I was both sorry and ashamed; and standing on the points of my feet, and trying to throw my arms round her neck, I said:

"All I meant to say was, that I love you; don't say it is wrong to do that, because Uncle Paulett told us we *were* to love you, and besides, I can't help it."

"Oh, no, that's not wrong, it's kind of you and of your good uncle, who is always kind; and I think I shall soon love you both as much as I do him," said Bloom, kissing us, as the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"You must not cry, Bloom," said I, tearing, without fear of Nelly, from the tape-tied loop which attached it to the side of my petticoat, my own pocket handkerchief, "a solid square," about the size of a D'Oyley, of coarse lawn, which, but for the honour and glory of the thing, and the charming little lilac border,

that meandered all round it, might have been called linen at once, and with it drying her tears, "for if you cry, you won't be able to see what Uncle Paulett has sent you; and he said I was to give it to you with his best love;" (and here I went over to the chair upon which I had deposited the work-box on entering,) "and what else was it he said about his being an old fox, Grace?"

"Nonsense, Mirry," interrupted Grace, quite as much embarrassed as if I had been dealing out original opprobrious epithets, in speaking of our dear good uncle. "Nonsense, he only said that Miss Belzoni had marked him some handkerchiefs so nicely, that he hoped she would soon mark him some more; and he sent her this work-box, because he was so much obliged to her."

"Oh, how beautiful!" cried the delighted Bloom, her eyes sparkling at the delicate chasing of the scissors, thimble, *étui*, and winders, which were embossed in a sort of green gold, but not enamel, "Regardez, mon père, comme c'est beau!" added she turning to her father.

"En effet, mais pas si beau que le naturel de celui qui te l'a donné."

"Ah! ça, c'est vrai," rejoined Bloom; after which, her father said to her in English:

"Where have you been, Bloom, dat you have your bonnet?"

"I had only been to see poor Pharaoh, whom I don't think is at all well, as he won't eat."

"Ah, ha; dat remind me I shall show you my littel dears, my oder children, while Bloom is getting ready to go wid you."

"What have you more children? I'm so glad! And may they go back with us too?" said I.

"I am afraid you will not find my oder childrens any great *agrément* to your *société*," replied Belzoni, smiling; "however, you can ask dem if dey shall like to go?"

And so saying, he led the way through the room out of which Bloom had just come, and which was her bedroom; and, unbolting a double door at the other end of it, we descended four or five steps, which brought us out upon a sort of bastion in the port-holes round which cannon were planted, while at one end of it stood a granite pyramid, about four feet in height, with an entrance to which was attached an iron ring and chain, which at Belzoni's approach began to rattle, and presently the occupant of the pyramid, a large eagle, emerged from it, and began to flutter his wings in token of recognition. At either side of this domicile strutted two other birds, who looked, from the arduous manner in which they were scratching and scraping a load of sand, laid down apparently for the purpose, as if having heard of the eagle's indisposition, they had come to write their names down at his palace door. One was an albatross,

white and stately, measuring at least ten feet from the tip of one wing to that of the other. The second bird was black as night, and was a kuril, or species of peterel. The albatross was called Isis, and the kuril, Osiris.

"So, poor old fellow, you are not well? What, you sigh, I suppose, for de land of Egypt, and are tired of de house of bondage, like your master, eh, Pharaoh?" caressing the eagle, who kept rubbing its beak against his hand, twisting its head in every direction, and making a curious gurgling-moaning sort of noise, as if hypochondriacally trying to express how much he needed all the condolence that a generous sympathy could offer him. During this *tête-à-tête* between Belzoni and the eagle, the petrel and albatross began impatiently flapping their wings, screaming, and resorting to every possible means to excite that share of attention which they considered their due. This was, to say the least of it, an unreasonable attempt at monopoly; for, were every one to be attended to at the same ratio, that is, according to his own standard of his personal claims to attention, there really would not be sufficient of that commodity left in the world to supply the demand of even one tithe of its present inhabitants.

"Well, well, Mrs. Isis—all in good time, and your black brother, too; how you do, both?" asked their master: and so saying, he walked over to a sort of tank and took out of it an immense ormer, and open-

ing it with a sort of oyster-knife, that appeared to be kept there for the purpose, he divided the tough contents between Isis and Osiris, who swallowed it as delightedly as a pair of antiquated beauties would have done an extorted compliment; after which, Belzoni gave the beautiful shells to us.

"And do they never fly away?" asked I, seeing that they watched him more like dogs than birds.

"You shall see," said he; and then again going up to the eagle and rubbing his head, he said:

"Don't you want to hear news of the Corsican eagle, eh, Pharoah? *Gr-r-r-redin de Corse!*"

And the bird again made a strange noise, as if answering his master, who then turning to the petrel and albatross, that were both intently watching him and bending their heads, first to one side and then to the other, as if literally awaiting his orders, he said:

"His Majesty, King Pharoah, desires to hear news from de French eagles; so, like dutiful and liege subjects as you are, see if you can meet wid any birds from dat country in de higher regions of air. Away, begone! but tarry not one hour longer dan twelve tomorrow;" and clapping his hands, away flew the birds, as obedient to the word of command, as if they had the benefit of a two years' drill in a crack regiment, or had graduated at some college of jugglers, and there taken a Master of Arts' degree.

"And will they really come back?" inquired Grace and I, in a breath, much astonished.

"To the minute," said Belzoni, "and I hope you will come back, too, and then you will see dem; but now we had better go and have some fruit, while Bloom is getting ready; so, good-bye, Pharoah. *Au revoir, mon ami, voici un orange,*" added he, taking a small Maltese orange out of his pocket, and giving it to the eagle, "*et, quant à la politique, tachez d'en tirer parti, et, puis jetez l'écorce!* ha, ha, ha!" and, delighted with this sarcastic mot, he once more took us by the hand, and led us round the bastion, till we reached another door, opposite to the one by which we had come out, and which opened into his own apartment, the identical one, the inner door of which I had seen ajar in the sitting-room, to which we now returned, and where we found three round old Dresden china baskets full of delicious nectarines, large black figs, fine muscatel grapes, and a box of sweetmeats, made at the convent of Santa Maria Novella, at Siena, of whose incomparable quince tablets I to this day retain a grateful recollection.

Neither was there any lack of divers choice wines, some in rare Venice glass flasks, and some in quaint burley bottles, draped in venerable cobwebs, as if trying to preserve an incognito against any accidental meetings with the monks, or burgomasters, whose vassals it was evident they had once been. Bloom had not yet completed her arrangements, so that we had full time to do justice to all these good things, with the exception of the wines, which we were too young to

appreciate, as wine, like wit, has no attraction for those who have no relish for it. Belzoni was in the act of pouring me out a glass of water, when we were nearly electrified by a loud peal of the door-bell, and, in another moment, we had the pleasure of hearing Don José's dulcet voice, asking Caramel, Belzoni's old woman:

"Why the deuce her master did not have an awning of some sort put up at that cursed door, as the sun darted down upon it enough to scorch a salamander?"

To which the old woman graciously replied:

"Then all who are not salamanders would do well to keep away from it; and you had better be the first to set them the example."

Such was also her master's opinion, if one might judge from the smile that played round his mouth, and the intense *gusto* with which he inhaled a pinch of snuff after he had listened to his hand-maiden's, or rather his hand-madam's reply, for the fair Caramel had been twice married.

"Why you little monkeys," cried the well-bred Sir Joseph, now strutting into the room, and thus apostrophizing us before he took any notice of our host. 'I should have thought you would have been at home half-an-hour ago." Then holding out one finger to Belzoni, without waiting for any invitation on his part, he drew a chair close to the table, flung himself into it, and seizing a tumbler held it up to the light to ascertain that it was *perfectly clean.* Grasping one

of the before-mentioned quaint-looking bottles, he poured out a tumbler full of its contents, and finally draining it, he performed a *charade en action* of a note of admiration, by clicking his tongue against the roof of his mouth, and requesting he might be shot if it was not the finest hock he had ever drunk in his life—"'Pon my word, I should be afraid to say how much of that wine I could take."

"Any *given* quantity, I suppose," said Belzoni, slily.

But Don José was not the man to be either abashed or turned aside from his purpose by a sarcasm, however keen; so he merely said coolly, as he replenished his glass,—

"If you have more of this wine than you want, Bel, I'll take it off your hands."

"I have not a single bottle more dan I want, and I'll not trouble you to take any more to-day, Sare Joseph, as it is not yet two o'clock; and in your kind zeal to relieve me of de *débris* of my cellar, I fear you shall give yourself a head-ache, and den you know, *bon gré, mal gré,* you would be *la mauvaise tête de la famille*—ha! ha! ha!"

But still Don José did not acknowledge, and therefore could not resent, any of Belzoni's inuendoes, for no man possessed in a more eminent degree than he did, that peculiar sort of discretion, which has been so truly denominated "the better part of valour." This it was which amid all "the glorious pomp and circumstance

of war," in the Peninsula, had prevented his ever nobly "seeking reputation at the cannon's mouth," and made him prefer rather to seek it at that of some fair Andalusian; this too it was, which more even than his habitual modesty led him, many years after, to suppress his name, when with the practical results of a long experience, he enriched the scientific literature of his country with a great work, though little book, entitled, "The Art of breakfasting abroad, and of never Dining at Home," knowing full well, that in England the scripture invocation of "Oh! that mine enemy had written a book!" seems to be strangely enough interpreted by society at large into "Oh! whoever writes a book is mine enemy." Don José, therefore, having sufficed to himself, during many a more important crisis, it was not likely he should prove inadequate to a skirmish of his own seeking with an old man of ruined fortunes, though it would appear, from the tone of his subsequent conversation, that it was to ascertain the exact state of those fortunes, and the precise degree of probability there might be in retrieving them, that had superinduced his present friendly visit. So looking round the room, and probably imagining we had left it, from the fact of our having retreated as far as possible from this great man into the recess of the window, he gave three sonorous hems to bespeak attention to the importance of his budget, and drew his chair some paces nearer to that of Belzoni, and said, assuming the air of a Socrates, (with the wisdom left *out,)*

"Now, my dear Belzoni, if you would open your mind, and explain to me exactly how your affairs stand, one might see one's way, and be able to help you." Here an indescribable expression of haughtiness flashed for a moment over Belzoni's face, but mastering himself with an evident effort, he bit his lip and said nothing, and the great man continued: "Now, my dear fellow, I am not talking *en l'air*; I am going to London, and as I really think you have some claims upon our Government—"

"The more claims one may have upon the English Goverment the less one may expect from it," interrupted Belzoni; "flimsy continental Governments, that cannot boast such a constitution, evince a most ignorant admiration for men of talent, and a plebeian gratitude which rewards the slightest service rendered to their country, with pensions and decorations; in England, the Government is wiser, and repays the greatest non-ministerial, or non-military public services with *crosses* only, or—promises!"

It was remarkable that in this speech, which he had uttered with considerable excitement, Belzoni had totally discarded the foreign accent and mispronunciations which he generally assumed.

"Well, my dear fellow," returned Don José with a deprecatory, yet forgivingly forbearing shrug, as if he had identified his own dignity with that of the Government, and said, "it is beneath us to resent this; let us leave the Government, my dear Belzoni."

"With all my heart," again interrupted the latter, "since it seems constructed upon the model of the Cretan Jupiter without ears; and for the same reason I suppose that one of the ancient mythologists assigns in the case of the statue, namely, that Jove, as governor of the universe, whose care ought to be for every one, should not be suspected of being particularly attentive to any individual."

With another shrug, more compassionate than the former, Sir Joseph, for the third time, returned to the charge:

"I was not alluding to your claims upon the Government, though I acknowledge them." (This must have been most consolatory to Belzoni, considering the unity that Don José seemed to have established between the Legislature and himself). "But to a private and much more certain channel of retrieving your affairs; if they are retrievable, I am acquainted with a solicitor, a monstrous clever fellow, who undertakes the clearing off of encumbered estates, hastens the foreclosing of mortgages (if desired), and leads forlorn hopes in the recovery of bad debts, for the most part with unexampled success."

"Indeed!" broke in Belzoni, pausing in the act of taking a pinch of snuff, as if seized with sudden and intense interest. "And pray what may the name of this phœnix be?"

"Barnivelt."

"So—" half articulated Belzoni, and then added,

looking his companion through to the very marrow, "And do you know much of this Barnivelt?"

"Personally no; but a friend of mine, Dingly Vavasour, whom though he passes for a *millionnaire*, being a gambler, is occasionally hard up, says Barnivelt is a trump, and gets him money when no one else can or will; for I suppose it is that."

Here an appalling change came over Belzoni's face; his eyes actually revolved like those of a person under the influence of epilepsy, but the convulsion was only momentary; he poured out a glass of water, and having drunk it, he set his teeth tightly, interlaced his hands, as if he had been twisting a serpent in his grasp; and this short paroxysm over, said with the most perfect calm, as if he had been merely remarking what a fine day it was:

"Thank you, my dear Sir Joseph, but my affairs are in hands that cannot be interfered with."

"My dear Belzoni," rejoined Don José with shrug the fourth, "this is child's play; if you would even let one know in whose hands they are—"

"In those of Providence, Sir Joseph Paulett," said Belzoni in a loud voice, rising and opening the door as if he expected his guest would take the hint and his departure together; but the outside of a door was not a position very easy to make Don José take up. So, though moving towards it, he turned round, and said:

"If you want to go into town, Bel, I can give you a

lift; and, by the bye, I should like you to see my dennet; I have got one on a new plan."

"Eh! what?" said Belzoni chuckling, and opening his snuff-box to Don José, "have you really paid for it? for I know generally you get your carriages on de plan of not paying for them."

The hero of Saragossa was too much a man of the world not to laugh at a jest of this kind, even at his own expense, especially as laughter is the best alkali to neutralize the sharpness of ridicule; so he said with a smile:

"Why confound it, a man can't be expected to pay everything; and I pay so many visits, that the bills take their chance."

"Ah! *ma foi*, de compliments have de best of it, as dey are sure to be accepted; but, for de poor visits, I doubt if dey are more honoured dan de bills, so I would discontinue dem, if I were you, my dear Don José;" laughed Belzoni; "and I shall be happy to discount you this one, and give you a receipt in full against all future demands upon your time."

The forced laugh with which Don José received this broad hint, sounded as like "impertinent old fool," as a mere cachinnation could do; however, of course, like castles in the clouds, or coffins in the fire, this was the mere force of imagination, as though the sun shone bright, the wind was high, and moreover, rushing like a conqueror through the long oak passage, as Madame Caramel, albeit not ordinarily the most

expeditious person in the world in her movements, had on this occasion flown to the hall door with the alacrity of a London porter, and now stood with it wide open to afford Sir Joseph Paulett every facility for his departure, which we also had the pleasure of witnessing, having left our ambush, and crept to Belzoni's side, who held the sitting-room door open until the outer one was fairly shut. Bloom making her appearance a few minutes after, Nelly took charge of a small Russian leather trunk, which contained her things, though Grace suggested that she had better go down, and send Mole up for it; but she seemed to prefer any fatigue to unnecessarily, that is, voluntarily, coming in contact with that formidable personage. So we took leave of Belzoni, and returned home, where we found the twelve Miss O'Donnells ! their four brothers, and two Miss Abrahams, awaiting us.

CHAPTER VII.

It was not to be supposed that we could pass our lives in juvenile *fêtes* with Bloom Belzoni and the twelve Miss O'Donnells, or even repose "in Abraham's bosom," seeing that we had not yet received our "evil things in this world." "Pleasure deferred is not lost," sayeth the proverb; but in that respect, at least, pain has the advantage of it, as there is always more certainty of recovery attending its delay than that of pleasure.

It will be remembered that we lived in an island—and an island in the War, like the heroine of a pantomime, was always threatened with invasions from every quarter. Napoleon, or Boneypartey, as the maid-servants called him, had quite succeeded Bogey, and every other *loup-garou* in the *répertoire* of nursery-terrors; and indeed when he, terrific as he was, did

not, with his elder brother, the Prince of Darkness (a piece of local theology in which I then religiously believed) prove sufficient to awe me into obedience, or deter me from revolt, it was announced to me that "Mrs. Boney should come and take me, and then I'd see how it would be." Now, of this much maligned member of the "gentler sex" I had conceived such unutterable horror, that even in after-life, when I beheld the cold, inane, selfish, and sensual ugliness of Marie Louise, I'm not sure that the aversion was in any way diminished; but at that time I had, merely from hearing her made the pinnacle of the imperial tyranny, endowed her with as great an aversion to me as that evinced by my aunt Marley, with, if possible, greater power to use it.

So much for the moral: *quant au physique*, I had given her a nankin-coloured skin, covered with large black spots, like those of a leopard, only without hair, which would have redeemed them in my eyes; a face like Punch, and large green tigerish eyes, to say nothing of horns, hoofs, and tails, *ad libitum*; which were among the least of the attractions with which I had endowed her.

In those days there were none of those deputy-Providences, nursery-governesses; though, if there had been, they would, poor things, have been rather better remunerated for their unpayable services than they are in these enlightened times of progress and improvement. Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, the French

appalling spouse, the dreadful night was
ır me (unable to close my eyes from terror)
recantation aloud, in the following heretical
Good Mr. d—l! good Mr. Buonaparte!
like the d—l!—I like Buonaparte! and I'm
Buonaparte must be the handsomest lady that
seen—handsomer a great deal than my Aunt
ıd a greater lady, too!"—for I would not, for
ousand toy-shops, have made so free as to
woman; and indeed, according to my pre-
notions of her, she did not deserve the name.
t is true, was for nothing in all this wicked
nd, though she had been guilty of innumer-
naids and "say monsters" at Castle Sedley,
had raised as a *corps de réserve* for the tug
f my education, yet she told the English
awe of their caps having greatly subsided),
ras a sin and a shame, so it was, to frighten
id what ra-ally *did* exist, and might, widout
purtection, come any day and make mince-
"

Grace did her best to persuade me that my diurnal fears were groundless, but that my nocturnal litanies were positively wicked; for that Aunt Marley said Bonaparte was the greatest man that ever lived, and so he couldn't be a bad man.

Grace had uttered a profound truth unawares, for to be really great, a man must be good; nevertheless, she need not have been in such a hurry to break a lance for Napoleon, as he was not the first, and won't be the last of the world's great men, whom a great portion of his contemporaries, and a still greater portion of posterity, has sent to the D—l!

"Oh, but," said I, "Aunt Marley is always praising the French Revolution, and yet what dreadful stories Uncle Paulett tells of it, and Dr. O'Donnell, too—and they were at the beginning of it, and must know: besides, look at those dreadful, dreadful pictures, in those big books in the library!"

I here alluded to a very large folio edition of the "History of the French Revolution," bound in Russia, with splendid plates, which the Duc de Bouillon had made my uncle a present of, upon his having taken it into his head to fall in love with my Aunt Marley. I may as well mention that circumstance here, lest I should forget it, though I never can forget his kindness, or all the pretty *bijouterie* and delicious fruit and flowers he used to send Grace and me, during the long siege of twelve years that he laid to my Aunt Marley, accom-

panied with madrigals and epigrams, at her, authenticated with his well-known signature, which looked for all the world like

PICCADILLY.

But considering, poor, dear old man, that he was nearly as wide as Piccadilly, no wonder that his name should look like it; for at that time he was, if anything, larger than his cousin, Louis Dix-huit, though more like in face to the pictures of Louis XVI. We were much annoyed, when we arrived at the respectable ages of twelve and fourteen, to find that my Aunt Marley had refused the offer he had so doatingly made her, for he was then seventy-two.

We insisted strongly that if she did not love him we did; but somehow or other neither she nor he seemed to consider that sufficient, even though his son, poor Philip d'Auvergne, who was afterwards drowned, was also on our side. But when we arrived at years of discretion, that is, when Charles X. was king, and we found ourselves going to balls in Paris, and properly dressed, we were still more annoyed that we had an aunt who could claim a *tabouret à la cour*, as Duchesse de Bouillon (though the poor Duke himself at that time was no more). We thought in those days of white *tulle* and white roses: it would have been so pleasant to have called the king one's cousin, even by marriage!

Indeed, I believe my Aunt Marley herself was of the

same opinion by this time, the more so that there had already been a slight, a very slight, tincture of royalty in the family, *le moindre soupçon*, as the French say, as a sister-in-law of my Grand-uncle Paulett's, the mother of Sir Reginald Paulett and another relay of nephews and nieces, the wife of his favourite brother, had *en seconde noces*, married the reigning Prince of one of the petty Italian States. She, like my Aunt Marley, had also been a great beauty, which beauty she largely bequeathed to her share of the family, and something better too, for they were decidedly the most gentlemanlike and respectable branch of it, though a little cold, and somewhat stately; but this, perhaps, was owing to their slight attack of royalty, though they had taken it in the very mildest form: *mais quand même? qui s'y frotte s'y pique!* But I am running away on this royal road into years that only came too soon; so let me return. One of poor Grace's arguments at this time was, in answer to my sweeping assertion that every one had had his head cut off in that horrid revolution, that that was not true; for look at all the French *émigrés* that were at ——, besides the Duc de Bouillon, and all the people too my Uncle Paulett employed. And Monsieur La Pépinière, our French master, though he disliked Bonaparte, would tell me that he was by no means the sort of monster that I imagined him to be, and had something else to do than to come and take away naughty children; and so Mademoiselle de Guilleragues would tell me also when she came.

But the very name of Mademoiselle de Guilleragues gave me a shudder, for my Uncle Paulett had told my aunts, in order to make them kind and considerate towards her, that she had been *dame de compagnie* to the poor Princesse de Lamballe; and forthwith one of the large books was sent for from the library, and my Aunt Bell, by way of something pleasing and instructive, showed me the horrid picture of the unfortunate Princess's head stuck upon a pike, and paraded through Paris, in the midst of an infuriated mob. So awfully graphic was the delineation, that it haunted me, and ever after poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues was associated in my mind with the murder of the Princess de Lamballe; and with that peculiar species of inverted logic (alas, not always confined to children), because she had lived with this ill-fated lady, I confounded her with the accomplices, or at least with the accessories, of her death; and in my inmost soul, therefore, set her down as one of Bonaparte's secret emissaries also.

Such an effect had these internal terrors upon me that I became thin and ill from want of sleep and loss of appetite; nor were my fears at all abated by the news that the Duke of Brunswick and the German Legion were to arrive in a day or two, *en route* for Spain; the very word legion conjured up to my timorous imagination nothing short of a diabolical phalanx, and it was not till the dear, good Duke had been domiciled with us a week, and had won every heart in the house, old and young, by his frank kindness and

unaffected amiability, especially to us children, that my fears began to fade, though to the long beards and longer pipes of the legion it took much more to get used; but at last even the smell of tobacco was forgiven, for the sake of the exquisite harmonies with which they filled the air in the stillness of the night, as they sang in parts along the beach, with that perfect unity of time and tune of which Germans alone are masters. Even Grace, so good, so orthodox in all things, used to get out of bed and open the window to listen to them; and of a moonlight night these concerts were infinitely more delightful than any I have ever heard since; and such is the omnipotence of music—at least of such music—that it completely banished my *idées Napoléoniennes;* but it was not because they were got out of it, but my head was franchised from absurdity altogether.

This said German Legion wore black velvet caps, in shape something like a chimney-top, about a quarter of an ell long, at the other end of which was sewn a flat round, about the size of a dinner-plate, lined either with card-board, or some other substantial material, and embroidered outside in circles of narrow gold braid, and this round hung over, not ungracefully, on the right side. Now it was not to be supposed that in the war, when everything was military, and ladies were *à la lettre* always in battle array, bearing about in their heterogeneous costume either some reminiscence of a victory or some tribute to the hero of it, that a

whole family could let such an opportunity escape of making themselves ridiculous.

Accordingly, two days after the arrival of the German Legion saw us, one and all, inducted into black velvet Brunswick caps, in compliment to the Duke,—I'm not sure that even Nelly had not received orders to convert the immortal brown beaver into a Brunswick Oëls, but I am very certain that she did not obey, not only because I heard her soliloquizing one morning about that time—"A pity I don't endade go convarting meself into one of thim outlandish sogers at wanchet; they'll be expicting me to grow a beard next, I suppose! Thim that sows may reape, but it won't be me:" but because also for many years after the brown beaver in its original form, or rather want of form, continued to "brave the battle and the breeze!"

About this time, an incident occurred which brought me acquainted with the only fault that the closest intimacy ever enabled me to discover in my Uncle Paulett; and though it is a fault common to most men, ay, to the wisest, the best, and even to the most physically brave, it is nevertheless one that produces the most baneful effects, the most fatal results to their own happiness, and to that of all with whom they are connected—I mean want of moral courage. The fact is, my aunts' tempers had already taken effect upon him, and he had begun to adopt that fatal code of—anything for a quiet life! A modern uncle, no doubt, would have asserted his authority, reminded them of

the obligations they were under to him, and requested them to leave the house if they made it disagreeable to him, and in this instance a modern uncle would have done right; but he, from the very fact of its being his house, and of their being under obligations to him, transposed the order of things, and with a refinement of delicacy that made him at once the greatest victim and the most loveable of human beings, forbore, yielded, and obeyed on all occasions, as if *he* had been in the penniless and dependent position for fear any of us should be reminded that we were.

Peace! gentle spirit, I forgive thee every childish tear thy one fault caused me to shed, in remembrance of thy bright, angel nature, of which no copy now remains! The only vengeance my poor father had taken on our extraordinary flight was, that of not making us any allowance, a plan which he persisted in up to the last day of his life, saying, that as we were living in such splendour, we did not want anything from him; but he was neither unjust nor vindictive, (why should he have been so, for they are the twin vices of the aggressor). He did not, as he might have done, insist upon our returning to him: on the contrary, he frankly acknowledged that his house, filled as it was with drunken fox-hunters, was not a proper home for two motherless girls. Upon this, both my aunts' favourite mode of venting their tempers was by reminding us that we were beggars, had no home, and were for all things indebted to their charity. *Their*

charity! oh, no, verily, there was none left for them, their uncle had monopolized it all, and not only their share, but from what I have since seen of it, the whole world's.

He was that living, breathing, active, incarnate virtue, believing all things, hoping all things, and certainly giving and forgiving all things; and yet contriving to appear ever the obliged, and never the obliger, when he heaped us with masters of every description, whom he selected from among the poor *émigrés*, and to whom he paid the most exorbitant salaries, not grinding and profiting by the necessities, after the prudent fashion of modern times, but on the contrary, his whole object being to convince them that they were not the least indebted to him, as it was entirely to gratify the wishes of his nieces and supply the wants of his grand-nieces that he had enlisted their services; and if this became suspicious from having duplicate masters for the same language or accomplishment, he would obviate that by telling one that he had him for his pronunciation, or his method of teaching, which he thought better than his colleague's, and as each were confidentially awarded this palm, there was no fear of any jealous rivalry being excited in either. While, on the other hand, we were apologized to for being bored with so many masters, but it was the only way of letting those poor people acquire for themselves a little independence; and to encourage us to study, or, as far as I was concerned, to reward me for not studying, the poorer refugees

would be ordered to make two or three dozen pairs of satin shoes, parterres of artificial flowers, or a whole *ameublement* of doll's furniture, according to whatever their different *métiers* might be.

What astonished me as I grew up was, how so crystally clear and open a character as my Uncle Paulett's, could have so impenetrably mysterious a right hand; for never by any accident did it let its left sister know what it did; which was the reason, I suppose, that it never signed its owner's name to a public subscription; and yet, in any five years of his life, I will venture to say he gave more hundreds and tens of hundreds to relieve the wants of his fellow-creatures than would suffice, at the present ratio of Whig charity (?), to pension off a whole wilderness of distressed widows of eminent men, or oceans of destitute daughters of departed heroes. But to my first terrible discovery *that my Uncle Paulett had a fault!*

I suppose it is needless to say that we were never allowed to take money from any one but relations, nor indeed had we much temptation to infringe this order, considering how lavishly, not only my uncles, and the aides-de-camp, but also the two Dukes, heaped us with toys; but as I mean to "nothing extenuate" as far as I myself am concerned, or "set down aught in malice" with regard to others, I must candidly confess that I was one of those Geneva watch kind of characters that are sure to go wrong, if not constantly wound up, and properly attended to. Now, as I have

before said, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had not yet arrived, and Nelly could not always enact guardian angel to me, as she was sometimes obliged to eat her dinner, though so doing involved a contact with the redoubted Mole; and as for my aunts, it may be supposed how fully their time was occupied, when for a whole week my Aunt Marley had not found a single leisure moment to call me a "vile wretch," or my Aunt Bell to give me a box on the ear; but as they thought it right to see us at least once a day, one morning that we were comfortably seated with Bloom Belzoni, who, with Grace, was good-naturedly cutting me out a Brunswick cap for my doll, which, as it had been a present from the Duke, I thought I could not do less than pay his generosity so charming a compliment, though, in sooth, it had now grown somewhat stale, for one saw nothing else for miles round, till the inhabitants began to look like so many ambulating eclipses of the sun, and strangers to wonder how on earth so much gold braid and black velvet had been drawn to one focus.

In the midst of our cabinet council, as to whether a feather would not be an improvement to the cap, which being negatived by the better taste of the two elders, I had decided on transferring to the battered brows of Miss Wapsey, a servant came to say that my aunts wished to see us in the summer-house, on the lawn, but that we must go immediately, as they were going out to ride, and the horses would be round in

ten minutes. Grace and Bloom got up to go, merely putting on their garden bonnets (for the Brunswick caps were only for the carriage, or for walking out *en grande tenue*). I was about to follow, when Dr. O'Donnell arrived, who had been attending me for the low nervous fever my nocturnal dread of the Bonaparte family had brought on. I told Grace and Bloom to go, and that I would come directly.

"Well, and how is my little patient to-day?" said the Doctor, goodnaturedly shaking hands with me.

"Oh, very well, quite well; indeed, I don't want any more draughts."

"What, I suppose you'd prefer playthings, eh?" laughed he, looking round the well-strewed floor.

"Oh, yes; a great deal."

"Well," said he, putting his hand into his pocket, and bringing out two bright guineas, "I, unfortunately, must stick to the draughts, and so have no time to choose toys, nor should I know what you would like; but perhaps, like a good little girl, you'll choose some for yourself; and so saying, he put the two guineas into my hand. I remember, as vividly as if it had only happened yesterday, the rush of tumultuous and conflicting feelings that now dyed my cheeks and ears in scarlet; regret was paramount, that I had been forbidden to accept money from strangers; shame, at the bottom, that I should have been offered it; while between these two extremes, danced buoyantly a vague notion, that with such a sum I should be for ever

independent of my aunts, and could even hire a ship, and go and see my father; for as to leaving my dear good uncle entirely, that I never would do; then came the toy-shop, with its scarlet and yellow temptations, and I with the golden power of selecting any of them that I pleased; oh, no, decidedly here was too much self-denial, and too much temptation tied together, like the Mezentian punishment of the living body and the dead, for my feeble, half-fledged virtue not to sink under so ponderous a burden; still I stammered, stretching out my hand to the Doctor, to take back the money, yet tightly grasping it the while:

"Oh, no, I mustn't take it; my aunts would be so angry; they said we were never to take money from strangers."

"Pooh! pooh! I hope you don't call me a stranger, Miss Mirry."

And before I could make either a negative or an affirmative reply to this query, Dr. O'Donnell had vanished, and there I stood confounded and alone, looking at the guilty guineas with much the same feelings that Lady Macbeth is supposed to look upon the "damned spot." My first impulse was to fling them down as if they had burnt me, and I did so, standing looking at them however for some seconds with my hands behind my back to keep them as it were from "picking and stealing." I wish I had remained so, but I didn't; whoever does stop short on the threshold of wrong? So like others, I stood contemplating

temptation till all its evil was effaced, and I saw nothing but its brightness; and so bright did the guineas look, as they lay on the carpet at some distance from my fascinated gaze, that my conscience soon grew as elastic as that of a cabinet minister. In a word, I stooped to the symbols of royalty, and made my own of the current fallacies I had at first virtuously rejected, and with a still further evidence of diplomacy, which even at that age would have rendered me competent to the Foreign Office, in placing the gold in my bosom I resolved to "bide my time," and let the lie that was to get me out of this scrape grow out of circumstances; for a premeditated lie is unpardonable. Whereas falsehoods *improvisés* are nothing more than proofs of that quick tact and fertility of invention which are considered one of the necessary attributes of office.

Relieved by this decision, I hastened to the summer-house, where I found my aunts ready equipped for their ride, and surrounded by their satellites, who were composed of several members of the German Legion; also the two aides-de-camp, Lord Frederick Farnham and Captain Dapperwit; indeed they were the centre of my aunts' social system, nothing went on without them; for Lord Frederick sang like Braham, rode a race as well as Chiffney, had won the cup at three successive regattas, and was reckoned the best cricket-player in England. While Dapperwit was skilled in the most exquisite caligraphy that ever

copied verses into an album, was thoroughly *au fait* to all the most amusing and ingenious *jeux de société*, also sang an excellent second, and moreover, like the youngest Miss Primrose, "had a very pretty knack of telling fortunes by the cards."

On entering the summer-house, my Aunt Marley was standing at one of the windows with the poor Duke of Brunswick, whose eyes were filled with tears; for he was showing her a lock of his wife's hair, which he always wore in the hilt of his sword. Dapperwit, who was a little *épris* with my Aunt Bell, but who was still more so with the interest my Uncle Paulett then possessed, was looking all sorts of silly things, and saying sillier, at which Lord Frederick and the Germans in their broken English were laughing.

"'Pon my soul," cried Lord Frederick, "if Miss Paulett persists in continuing so inhuman I would not stand it any longer were I you, Dapperwit. Here," added he, tapping the brazier with the scabbard of his sword, "is every convenience for committing suicide, or, in other words, reducing your heart by means of its own flame to cinders; you have only to fancy yourself Socrates, preferring fire to hemlock; that's all."

"Ha! ha! ha! Ter Tifle! bote vere ish de gock dat he shall sagrifiche do Æsgulabius firsht?" asked Baron Doodlezac, one of the Legion.

"Oh!" said Dapperwit, good-humouredly, "when one sacrifices an 'ass' to him, surely Esculapius cannot be so unreasonable as to expect more."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the Baron, slapping the poor aid-de-camp like a sledge-hammer on the back, "you are von capital fellowsh, and no more assh dan I am."

"*L'un n'empêche pas l'autre,*" murmured Lord Frederick.

While all the world was thus busy with himself, or his neighbour, what I then thought a brilliant idea, struck me as to how I might become lawfully possessed of my ill-gotten wealth; it was this: it so happened that on the sill of the window by which my Aunt Marley was standing there was a mignionette-box; under the pretext of joining the Miss Cookes and Lady Laura O'Shindy, who with some of the German officers were looking through telescopes at a French *chasse-marée* in the distance, I left the summer-house, and walked round it outside till I came to the window where my Aunt Marley was standing, and upon the mignionette-box of which she had laid down her pocket-handkerchief and *casolette.* Now, though in those days California was undreamt of, save in the foreshadowings of the works of Sir Walter Raleigh, I immediately repaired to 'the diggings,' which I commenced by poking with a stick among the mignionette, and when I had enacted this pantomimic falsehood for what I considered a sufficiently plausible length of time, I suddenly exclaimed, holding up the clay-daubed coins:

"Oh! look here, Aunt Marley, what I have found!"

But my aunt, still deeply engrossed by her conver-

sation with the Duke of Brunswick, who was telling her his strong presentiment that he should fall (as he did) in the first general action in which he should again find himself, merely stretched out her hand for the money, saying:

"There—there, give it to me; and go and play, child."

"But is it yours?" demurred I, making a last effort to retain that which I had already waded through so much iniquity to possess.

"Yes—yes," said my aunt, mechanically taking the money, and not even turning her head towards me, so interested was she in her conversation. At this moment, one of the footmen came to say that the horses were at the door. My Aunt Marley scrambled up her handkerchief and *vinaigrette* and still speaking in an under tone, she took the Duke's arm, and left the summer-house, followed by the rest of the party; and although Bloom Belzoni and Grace stopped their ears against the horrible clatter of so many spurs and swords clashing against the marble steps as they descended, I stood as mute and motionless as if I also had been a part of the same marble. I heard nothing till I heard the echo of the horses' hoofs galloping away, and with them my two guineas—Mine!

CHAPTER VIII.

This affair of the guineas had ended precisely as it ought to have done, and gave me a salutary lesson at the onset of life; namely, a practical illustration of that immutable fact, that what is begun in wrong can never end right. Had I succeeded in this first flagrant delinquency, it would doubtless have been fatal to every germ of honesty and rectitude in my composition; but, thank Heaven, I did not; and the bitter humiliation and self-reproach which I experienced at this failure in my *début* in commercial speculations and the "distribution of wealth," make me think, upon looking back, that Nelly was right, and that "for all I was so banged about by de Misthress and Missh Bell, still God had a hand in me." I was so utterly miserable for the rest of this day, that in vain Grace and Bloom asked me what was the matter,

and if I was not well. Still I kept aloof from them, for I felt as if I should contaminate them, that is, that they would not speak to me if they knew what I had done; and so I paced round and round the lawn, decapitating, by means of a withered branch that I had broken off of a Persian lilac, all the innocent heads of the michaelmas daisies, and the tops of the geraniums.

"Don't, Mirry," cried Grace, at length, running across the lawn to the rescue, and taking the stick by main force out of my hand, "don't! Fraser will be so angry when he sees the way you have destroyed all the flowers, and the litter you have made. What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Oh, there must be something the matter; for I never saw you so odd and so naughty as you are to-day."

"Well, now you know what's the matter with me," said I, bursting into a forced laugh; "I'm like Dermot, exthramely bould, Ma'am, that's all."

As this story of Dermot was a standing nursery joke, Grace laughed too, and shaking her head, said, "That's true," as she re-crossed the lawn to join Bloom. After I had sulked myself ill at my own share in the guinea question, a sudden thought darted through my brain, as to whether my Aunt Marley was not even more to blame than I was, for she had said the money was hers, when she must have known that it was not:—this was a consolation. It is always

so, to find any one at least as bad as ourselves. Does this arise from inherent depravity? or from a yearning for sympathy in all things? A little of both, perhaps. But then in stepped Justice (who scarcely ever arbitrates between human beings, except in a court of conscience; and even those, alas! are not always open); and she reminded me that my Aunt Marley was so pre-occupied, that she had paid little attention to either me or the money. Oh, yes, that must be it; for of course, grown-up people couldn't tell stories, any more than they could want money; and it seems I had jumped to a true conclusion, for experience has since proved to me that the one is just as *impossible* as the other.

But then, at that rate, my Aunt Marley ought to be undeceived. Why should she be left in quiet possession of two guineas' worth of illusion, at the expense of my having that much less? And yet again, in order to undeceive her, she must know the heinous part which I had acted in the business; this was not pleasant certainly, but still anything was better than her coolly walking off with this gold mine, for which I had paid so dearly by the terrible struggle of the last two hours, and the ultimate loss of my own self-esteem. The difficulty then became as to the how; and when; I should broach this weighty matter to her; (always supposing that when it came to the point, I found my courage constructed upon an anti-Bob Acre's principle, and that it did not "ooze out

at my fingers'-ends;") for no Czarina was ever more difficult of access than my Aunt Marley.

Where then to turn in this dilemma? where, indeed, but to our only city of refuge, my Uncle Paulett? "Yes, that's what I must do," thought I, "go and tell him everything, and get him to tell it to my Aunt Marley." No sooner said than done. I hurried across the lawn, swinging both arms much after the same graceful fashion as a helper traversing a stable-yard; for it is no less strange than true, that that peculiar genus of biped invariably uses more energetic motion with their arms in walking than with their feet. On reaching the hall, such a coward does conscience make of one, that when the two lazy knights of the shoulder-knot, that were sitting there reading the papers, stood up at my entrance, I stammered and blushed, and pulled the string of my cambric muslin bonnet till I tore it, which was, indeed, a work of supererogation, till one of them said:

"Shall I call Mrs. Bawn, Miss?"

Whereupon, attempting to assume the authoritative air of my Aunt Marley, but in vain, it could not be crammed into so small a compass, I was therefore necessitated to dwindle down into civility, and said:

"Oh, no, if you please, don't; I want to see my uncle."

The Captain is out with the ladies, Miss."

"No, I don't mean my Uncle Charles, I want to

see my Grand-uncle, Sir George, if you will go and ask him, if you please, if I may come ?"

"I'm very sorry, Miss, but we dusn't disturb his Excellency, as to-day is the English Bag Day, and he is very busy with Mr. Waltham."

"Well, but isn't he going out to ride to-day?" asked I, as a *pis-aller*.

"Is the hosses ordered, do you know, James?" said my referee, turning to his colleague.

"I believe they be, at four; but I know Mr. Morden has had orders to lay for only three, in the small dining-room, as no one dines at home but Sir George and Mr. Waltham."

"Then who's the third cover for?" pumped James.

"The Dooke of Bullone, I believe."

"Oh!" said James, as if much relieved by knowing the worst.

"But if he is to go out at four—what o'clock is it now?" said I.

"Half-past two ezacly, Miss," replied the chronological Mr. Thomas, interrogating the pale face of a sort of silver turnip (evidently a married one, as it was attached by an iron chain), which he drew from some mysterious gulf under his waistcoat.

"That's two hours to four, then," said I, counting on my fingers that two and two made four.

"Oh, dear, no, Miss, honly a hour hand a alf," responded Thomas, with a degree of contempt for my ignorance that he could ill suppress.

"That's a long time too, though, isn't it?" re-demanded I, exposing my ignorance still further.

"As near as can be, six quarters of an hour, Miss."

"Why, you said just now that it was only an hour and a half," said I, almost crying.

"Exacly, Miss; the six quarters is honly small change for the large hour hand a alf, Miss—that's hall."

Re-assured by this lucid explanation, I returned to the lawn; but my shoe-string giving way as I was going down the steps, caused me to stoop to pick it up, by which means I unintentionally became an eaves-dropper, and overheard the following fragments of conversation.

"And *that!*" said Mr. Thomas, evidently meaning me by the word *that*, so emphatically pronounced—"*that!* is how the nobility and gentry brings up their young. Why, I should be ashamed if my Bill, though he's three year younger, didn't know the time o' day better."

"Ah, but as Mrs. Marley is always a saying at dinner, Tummas, we must make hevrey allowance for the circumst*an*ces in which hindewiduals his placed; and jist consider what a clever father your Bill has got."

"There you go with your jokes agin," growled Tummas, in return for this compliment. "Shove us over that ere noospaper, do."

"That's your sort," responded James, presenting

him with a flaming account of the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, and then

"Trembled into silence as before!"

Opposite to the house, on the other side of the lawn, was a rising ground, with a thick coppice of trees; among these I now hid myself, keeping my eyes steadily fixed upon the house; and before the, to me, interminable hour and a half was expired, I heard Nelly's voice several times imploring me, "if I didn't want to dhrive her wild entirely, to appear;" but even thus invoked, I remained invisible, merely executing, for my own private amusement, and with the fidelity of a shadow, all Nelly's gestures and exclamations; the latter sometimes so loud, that it caused her to cry out more than once:

"Och! Divil bother you for an echo: one wud tink you had niver heerd a Christian spake befure, dat you musht go repating ivery word dey do be shaying."

At length, fairly tired out with making the "rocks and woods" repeat my name, and not thinking, like Orpheus, of seeking me in the shades, Nelly went in, and at last the horses came to the door; and about a quarter of an hour after them, my Uncle Paulett appeared on the steps. I darted from my ambush, and ran over to him. He lifted me up, and kissed me; and after his usual good-natured inquiries about our plays and our pleasures, and anything else that he

:e, I want to speak to you.
am, I am at your service," said he, with his
;ous smile, dismounting and taking off his
ake me a low bow, as was his wont when for
sed to treat Grace and I with great ceremony.
re shall we have our conference?—that is,
all we go? for I suppose what you have to say
a secret."
yes, a great long one," replied I, laughing.
more flattered at your confidence, Ma'am,"
he, continuing the jest, as he led me into a
dy off the hall and shut the door.
r, my child," said he, taking me on his knee,
hear this mighty secret, and see what I am

much blushing, stuttering, and hanging my
ot forgetting my unhappy cambric muslin
hich I gathered up and twisted like a rope in
ous excitement, till what began like hemp
i tinder, I at length revealed the whole affair,
e moment of Dr. O'Donnell's giving me the
and the conflicts of my expiring probity down

difficultly-suppressed smile now beaming in my uncle's eyes, now playing round his mouth; but, when I came to my acted falsehood in the summer-house, he knit his brows, and put me down. Not all the manifold beatings I had ever received from my aunts, caused me the pain of this silent reproof on the part of my uncle. I felt, though he had not yet spoken, that I had at one blow annihilated much of his affection, and given him a bad opinion of me. A sharp pain shot through my heart,—I burst into a passion of tears, and falling at his feet, I sobbed out, with clasped hands:

"Oh, dear, dear Uncle Paulett, don't hate me; I know how wrong I have been; I never will take money from any one again; and indeed—indeed, I'll tell Aunt Marley the truth about it, as I have told you."

"Hush!" cried my uncle, mechanically turning his head towards the door, and in his turn supplicatingly raising his hands. "No, that is the very thing you must not do—you must not tell your Aunt Marley," added he, lifting me up on the table! "it was wrong of you in the first instance to take this money from O'Donnell, when your aunts had told you never to do so from any one. You should ask me, or them, when you want money. But that, had you confessed it, would have been but a trifling fault in comparison with your pretending to find it among the mignionette. Miriam, that was bad—very bad; for you had thought a long chain of lies, before you acted that one."

It was the first time he had ever called me Miriam —solemn, ceremonious Miriam, instead of affectionate, playful Mirry; and the word went through my heart, cold and sharp as a dagger.

"I know it was wrong," cried I, bursting into a fresh paroxysm of tears; "and that is the reason that I am determined to own it all to Aunt Marley."

"Don't you see, you little goose, how justly angry your Aunt Marley will be, and what good reason she will have to punish you severely?"

"I know that; but then I deserve to be punished, don't I?"

"Why you certainly do; but since you confess this so frankly, I am in great hopes that you will be cured without punishment, and will keep your word, not only of never taking money from strangers again—for that is the least of it—but of never telling a lie again; for in doing so it is God you disobey, and that is far worse than disobeying your aunts or me."

"And will God never forgive me?" asked I, now as pale and cold, as I had before been flushed and burning.

"Yes, if you pray to Him to forgive you with your whole heart, and really repent."

"What does repent mean?"

"It means never again to commit the fault, or sin, for which we say we are sorry; that is the only real repentance, at least the only one that God accepts, and for which He accords His forgiveness."

"Oh! then indeed I do repent, for I never, never will tell a lie again; so now God has forgiven me, and I can't help it if my Aunt Marley won't."

"But I don't wish you to tell your aunts of this; it would only flurry and annoy them." And my poor uncle coloured (as well he might) at his pusillanimous consideration for my aunts' nerves, though indeed, in consideration of his own, he might be pardoned for taking such care of theirs; but I, who was storm-proof by this time, felt no such tenderness towards them, and so merely said:

"But if I don't tell my Aunt Marley, and if I'm not punished, how am I to get back Dr. O'Donnell's two guineas to return them to him?"

"You can give him these," said my uncle, putting his hand into his pocket, and giving me two.

"Oh, but that is not just," said I; "my Aunt Marley has told a story as well as me, and—"

"Hush!" interrupted my uncle, putting his hand on my mouth, "you must not say that your Aunt Marley has told a story: she has made a mistake, she evidently thought the money was hers."

"Then why should she be let to make a mistake, and not be told of it?" said I; "it's not just, and I want justice."

"Listen to the little puppy," cried my uncle (this being a great pet appellation of his); "she wants justice! forsooth; so does the whole world, child; but who ever gets it?"

"I don't know; but I don't."

"Now look here," said my uncle coaxingly, feeling how completely I, child as I was, had him at a vantage; "the great thing in this world, my dear child, is to make the best of things; for as to making them as we would like, it's utterly impossible. And you ought to think yourself very lucky to have got so well out of the scrape,—the more so, Ma'am, that I invite you and your sister (if you will do me the honour), and your friend, Miss Belzoni, to come and spend this evening with me."

"Oh!" said I, my eyes sparkling; "and will you tell us stories?"

"As many as you please, Ma'am."

"Ah! but will you love me, too, and call me Mirry again?"

"I think I can even promise to do that."

And thinking the battle was now over, and that he had gained the victory, he kissed me, slapped my cheek with his glove, and lifting me down off the table, proceeded to the door. But I, supremely happy as I now felt, could not without a last effort, leave my Aunt Marley in unmolested possession of what by no means belonged to her; so, returning to the charge, as my uncle opened the door, I said:

"But musn't I really tell Aunt Marley?"

"On no account," cried my uncle, in evident alarm, placing his finger on his lip, and shaking his head.

"But how can she repent of having told a story, if she is not let to know that she has done so?"

But logic, where his nieces and nephews were concerned, not being my poor dear uncle's *forte*, he found it convenient not to hear this query; and so merely said, as he mounted Lightning, his beautiful Arabian, and I stood on the steps:

"Remember, Mirry, I shall expect you all down to dessert and to pass the evening with me; and send and ask Mary, and Lily O'Donnell, to come, too;" and kissing his hand, he turned slowly down the avenue, and in another minute the echoes of Lightning's hoofs, with those of the two dragoons' more substantial steeds, were heard, sharp and clear, galloping along the high road. But as Galileo's last words, as the key turned in his cell of the Inquisition, were a profession of those astronomical opinions, for which he was incarcerated, so mine were as I turned into the house.

"But my Aunt Marley ought not to be let to tell a story though, without being told of it, for all that."

CHAPTER IX.

GLAD as the tidings were that I had to communicate on my return to the school-room, where Grace and Bloom had been wondering for the last three hours where on earth I could be, and why I did not come back; and Nelly had been in and out on an average three times a minute, to know if I had been "heerd of?" yet had I the very greatest difficulty in not unburdening my mind still further to Grace about the guineas. Nothing but the strong fetter of my Uncle Paulett's last injunction, that my aunts were to know nothing about the matter, could have prevented my doing so; but I knew telling Grace was exactly the same thing as telling my Aunt Marley, as my conscientious sister thought it a duty to tell her everything; so by way of answer to her question of

"Where on earth have you been all this time,

Mirry? You've frightened us all out of our wits, and Nelly is almost distracted."

"Oh, I've been with Uncle Paulett; and only think, I've such good news,—every one dines out, except Sir George and Mr. Waltham. And we, that is, Bloom, you, and I; and Mary and Lily O'Donnell, who we are to send to directly, are all to spend the evening with Uncle Paulett, and he'll tell us as many stories as we like, there." And I danced round and round, and clapped my hands; after which I seated myself before a table, upon which stood a looking-glass, and having asked Bloom for a piece of thread, I began trying experiments in dental surgery, by tying it round one of my upper front teeth which had long been loose, and tugging away at it, apparently with herculean efforts, but in reality relaxing them whenever the tooth seemed the least inclined to yield to the assault, and by so doing hurt me in the slightest degree.

"And don't Don José even dine at home?" asked Grace, thinking that would be too good news to be true.

"No, Crooked-nose don't dine at home; for I heard James tell Thomas, that only Uncle Paulett, Mr. Waltham, and the Duc de Bouillon, dined here to-day, and they were to dine in the small dining-room off the yellow-room. Ain't you glad?" And she was glad, for both she and Bloom whirled round, and made an enormous cheese. So much for the dairy.

The quandary appeared immediately after, in the shape of Nelly wringing her hands, and exclaiming:

"Och! musha, musha: but dis bates de world for bouldness; and wheder she's safe or not, she'll get her death out, at any rate."

"No, I shan't, I've only got my tooth out; and here it is, look, Nelly," said I, getting down off tho chair, and triumphantly holding out the tusk as a trophy."

"Och, murder! is it yourself, me darlint?" screamed Nelly as loudly and harmoniously as an American Indian war-whoop. After which, I had to undergo a rather suffocating *régime* of hugging, terminating by way of tonic in a pretty sharp reprimand for "frightening de lives out of paple as I had done, and where did I tink I was to go to?"

"I don't know; but you are to go directly to Mrs. O'Donnell's, and ask if she will let Mary and Lily come and spend the evening with us, that is, with Uncle Paulett, in the yellow-room, where all the pretty cabinets, and china, and medals, and things are."

"Oh, indade, do itsh dochtering I want, sure enough, afther the state you've put me in, Missh Miriam; yet I can't go by raison of the frocks I want to finish for you and Missh Grace, agin you go down to dishert to-day; for if you were de Prinche Ragent's childer itshelf, you'd be a dishgrace to all be lionsh and uney-corns dat ever wash born, going

about in dem two ragsh of rockets dat have only been fit to frighten de crows dish last six months, and even dey wud be mighty schtupid bastes if dey didn't see trough 'em; but Mishtressh Stillingfleet ish going dere wid some jellies and cakes for de childer, and I'll bid her give Sur George's message."

At length, the happy moment came when we were to be dressed to go down stairs; and I doubt if any bride of the present day, armed with all the seductive witcheries of Mesdames Minette and Palmyre, capped by Baudron, could be half so well convinced of the irreproachable perfection of their toilette, as we, or at least as I was, upon being stuffed into a large blue jelly-bag, made of an abomination, called, in the War, Salisbury flannel, and (excepting its ugliness) only famous for two things, namely, palpably shrinking both under the influence of fire and water; and unmercifully scrubbing and scratching the arms and necks of the unfortunate young delinquents condemned to solitary confinement within the remorseless precincts of its woollen pillory.

Nelly having made this addition to our wardrobe upon her own responsibility, had been determined to do the thing handsomely; consequently, above each tuck was run a piece of tolerably-wide blue and yellow braid, not unlike that which used to adorn old-fashioned liveries, only that this was silk instead of worsted: however, the three huge tucks of these lovely frocks need not have given themselves such airs, and

stuck themselves out so for all that; for in those days (as far as the tucks of children's frocks were concerned at least), there was no knowing how soon pride would have a fall; for it no sooner pleased Heaven in the natural course of things that we should grow a couple of inches, than down went a tuck. I was not then aware, that "Nature" had the good taste to "abhor a vacuum," but I know that I did; for nothing could be more abominable than the appearance of these deserted railroads skirting our garments, which never owned a swifter locomotive than a lukewarm iron, of which Nelly was the solitary stoker. But on the present occasion, the tucks had not all the finery to themselves, for on the front of the bodice the same braid (only narrower) was to be seen in an ingenious sort of puzzle, displayed in a pattern something like that of a lazy-tongs, and the stripes on a backgammon board.

Grace, from her more matured age and quiet deportment, was permitted the "pomp and vanity" of wearing her hair parted down the centre, and though docked close behind, *à la* raw recruit, yet at either side of the forehead luxuriating into tufts of stiff, flat curls, one laid over the other, as round as a set of wedding-rings in their as yet harmless state—before they have left the jeweller's shop. Whilst I, on account of my more perturbed, that is, Tom-boyish habits, was made to look still more brazen, by having my hair brushed up into a sort of cataleptic rigidity, like nothing

in the world but a scrubbing-brush which had received some sudden and terrible alarm, from which its nervous system had never recovered. A pair of bright yellow *kid* shoes, a world too wide, completed my charming costume; the latter were "by particular desire" of Nelly. Grace stoutly resisted, and finally terminated in a pair of black kid.

I confess that even at that age, and in the War, this daffadowndilly *chaussure* struck me as something flagrant and offensive, and even somewhat abusing the universal suffrage people then enjoyed of making themselves ridiculous. But altogether I was so charmed with my appearance in the, to me, novel splendour of the Salisbury flannel, in which I must have looked like a moving panorama of Salisbury Plain, and was so delighted at the pleasant evening in view, that I was too well pleased myself not to wish to please others, and so to please Nelly, I put my foot in it, as indeed one is pretty sure to do when one acts against one's judgment, even from the most laudable of all motives—that of obliging others. At length, the O'Donnells arrived: Grace ran forward to meet and to greet them, but then she had not yellow kid shoes on. I did not, or rather I could not, for I had tried, but suddenly ended by coming to a full stop in a sort of petrified attitude, not unlike that of the Commandant's statue inviting Don Giovanni to supper.

I felt so big, that I'm sure I must have been "grand to see;" but some children *are* so silly! and Miss Lily

O'Donnell on coming up to me, even before she kissed me, burst out laughing, and said:

"Oh, Mirry, how funny you look!"

Funny!—and had I suffered the scrubbings of the Salisbury flannel (which had already produced mock scarlet fever), and shuffled about in a pair of yellow canoes that threatened to upset me at every step I took,—to be called funny! Verily, I should like to have invested her father's two guineas, which were still in my possession, in the purchase of a dictionary, to have taught that illiterate young person a better choice of language.

"You had better ask your mamma to give you a blue frock, too, Lily," said I, with great dignity, which was a polite way of transposing the following aphorism: "You had better satisfy your longing, than expose your envy." However it was written, that the O'Donnells and ourselves were to be to each other at once rivals and censors in the matter of dress, as will be seen in its proper time and place; on all other points we were excellent friends, and as such, the nursery-bell having just rung, we now all descended, I leaning on Bloom, who if she had not admired my dress and *tout-ensemble*, at all events had not told me that I looked funny!

Another delight attending this happy occasion was, that instead of perpetrating the elegant curtesy *de rigueur* at the door, which Nelly's ideas of what she called manners usually exacted, we walked straight

into the little brown dining-room, as it was called, though in reality it was a fine oval room of thirty feet by twenty-five, with the ceiling and panels painted in compartments by Cipriani, and the carving round these panels, and also of the looking-glass over the side-board, which was in a deep recess, was white picked out with brown, very like a chocolate drop, which with the delicacy of the paintings gave this room the air of a large *bonbonnière*, and from this brown and white carving and its brown velvet curtains, it had derived the name of the brown room.

This apartment opened into a drawing-room hung with yellow damask, and looking upon a beautiful terrace, to which one descended from one of the windows by a flight of steps; it was furnished with Louis Quinze *cabriole* chairs, and *causeuses*, and choice *marqueterie* cabinets, and *bureaux* inlaid with old *sèvre*, the part which let down for writing being covered with purple velvet, and the small drawer daintily lined with white satin. Most of these were presents from the Duc de Bouillon, and in one of them were some very costly old turquoise jewelled *sèvre* dessert-plates, and coffee-cups, containing portraits of the beauties of the courts of Louis Quatorze and Louis Quinze, that is to say, *six of one, and half-a-dozen of the other*, and of these, as they appeared on the china, the old De Maintenon and the young Du Barry were unquestionably the handsomest. There were also, several crab-shaped gold snuff-boxes, with portraits let into them of Mademoiselle de Blois, the

Duc de Maine, the Comte de Toulouse, and others of Louis Quatorze's children.

There was, too, in this room a very fine collection of medals, cameos, and other antiques, of all and each of which my uncle used to tell us the history. James had been quite correct in his information. There was, to our unspeakable delight, only my uncle, the Duc de Bouillon, and Mr. Waltham, sitting round the dinner-table when we arrived. Mr. Waltham had a mild, interesting, intelligent face, of which no one could be afraid; all he received in the shape of salary, which was three hundred pounds a-year, he sent to his mother (a widow) and his only sister. And it was astonishing the pieces of silk, chests of tea, and pipes of wine, my Uncle Paulett was obliged to buy from persons in distress, and afterwards put himself under an obligation to his secretary to disencumber the house of, by sending them to his mother and sister.

The poor old Duc de Bouillon having, much to her annoyance, decided that I was the image of my Aunt Marley, and consequently, according to him, a *délicieuse petite créature*, stretched out his little fat arms to me the moment I appeared; and as he was, besides being the quintessence of good nature, scrupulously *soigné* in his person, and also adhering to the *ancien régime* in his dress, generally wearing a purple velvet coat, and a white satin waistcoat embroidered in rich wreaths at the pockets, with splendid lace ruffles, and

jabot; and being always moreover redolent of *maréchale,* a perfume then unknown at this side of the channel, I always went to him with quite as much alacrity as he invited me; for after the broad cloth and Hessian boot monstrosities of the men in the War, he was to my childish wonder a curious study of the last link of a gorgeous and gone-by age.

We were all seated round the table—eating, laughing, talking, and enjoying ourselves in the most unrestrained manner; I dauntlessly screaming out from the other end of the table to my Uncle Paulett:

"Now for some stories; you said you'd tell us as many as we pleased."

"And so I will, Ma'am, but let us finish our wine first; and, when we go into coffee, then it shall be put to the vote what story you would like to hear."

"It's not to be about the Prince of Wales, though, going to France secretly with you, and General Conway, to play a game of piquet with the Queen of France, is it?"

This question originated in that happy knack that children have, when cautioned not to allude to a subject of always recurring to it, in order to announce the pains they are taking to avoid it, lest, otherwise, their arduous endeavours at obedience should not be appreciated; and, indeed, they are not the only individuals who like to impress their fellow-creatures with a due sense of the struggles and sacrifices they have made, or are making, on their account; for there are very

few persons so silly now-a-days as, like my Uncle Paulett, to

"Do good in secret, and blush to find it fame."

We had been ordered, while the Duke of Brunswick remained with us, never to allude to the Prince Regent before him, or ask my uncle to tell us any stories about him; for as "the first gentleman of the age" had treated his sister in a manner that an honest scavenger would have been ashamed to have treated—even his wife (that only beast of burden not included in the Cruelty to Animal's Act) the subject of course would have been a disagreeable one to him.

"Why, you puppy," cried my uncle, flinging a little bullet of sponge biscuit at me across the table, "you know you were not to mention the Prince of Wales's name for the next twelve months to come."

"No; I know I am not: that's the reason I was telling you that you are not to tell us any stories about him."

In the midst of the universal laugh that followed this brilliant speech of mine, the door opened, and Don José walked into the room, pausing however before he seated himself, and sending a circular stare round the table as if to inquire whether we were all mad; while, on the other hand, I doubt if the Wakefield family, when indulging in hunt the slipper with the Miss Flamboroughs, "and all bloused and red" from the beatitudes of the game, could have been more

painfully abashed and astounded by the unexpected arrival of "the town ladies," than we were at this unforeseen invasion of Sir Joseph Paulett. With the exception of myself, who would not be awed by this great man, Bloom, the two O'Donnells, and Grace, instantly coloured scarlet, hung their heads, and altogether seemed as if thorns had been suddenly substituted for the stuffing of the chairs upon which they sat; and indeed, judging from their instantaneous silence, and the gloom that overshadowed their countenances, I don't think the adults bore up against this heavy blow a bit better than we did.

"Ahem! my dear uncle," said Don José, seating himself, pouring out a glass of claret, and then pushing away the dishes and glasses on each side of him, so as to make room for both his arms, which he leant horizontally upon the table, "I was dining at the mess of the ——th, but their messman having got information that two magnificent turtles had just been brought to the island, I did not even wait for the roast, but galloped back immediately, that you might lose no time in telling Vatel to secure one of them."

"I'm very much obliged to you," said my uncle in a tone however that rather implied—I wish you and your officiousness were at the d—l; "but, my dear Joseph," continued he, "it is a pity you did not wait till to-morrow morning."

"What is a turtle?" asked I, facsimileing the graceful attitude of Don José, and leaning both my

arms full-length on the table, while I stared him undauntedly in the face, as if he had been no more than an ordinary man.

"A turtle, my dear," (for I remarked before the Duc de Bouillon, Don José was always remarkably affable, indeed I might almost say gracious and condescending to me and Grace), "a turtle, my dear, is a huge sea-monster, about half the size of this table, and very good in soup; but I've got a turtle in my pocket, which I'll show you if you'll come here."

"No, you haven't," said I, politely; "for if it is half as big as this table, how could it fit in your pocket?" But still curiosity prevailed, and I walked round to the great man, repeating, however, while he continued the search in his pockets, "I don't believe it."

"Seeing is believing," responded Don José.

"Not always," retorted I, pertly; "for I see you every day, and yet I never believe you."

A perfect roar followed this *lazzi* of mine, with an "Est-elle spirituelle, cette petite?" from the Duke, which seemed to annoy Don José more even than the laugh I had raised at his expense; but he said nothing but "There!" placing before me a snuff-box made out of a large Labrador stone, in the shape of a tortoise or turtle; and then, turning to my uncle, he said:

"I've had a letter from Dosey this evening, and she, Fiametta, and the boys, will be here in a fortnight;

and then I shall start for Cadiz. Oh! by the bye, she says Philip Vavasour, who is growing an uncommon fine boy, has had the measles, and wants change of air: so Dosey told his mother she was sure you would be delighted to see him."

"His mother might have been sure of that," murmured my uncle, and a slight flush suffused his cheek; but he merely said aloud: "Then Philip is coming with your people?"

"He is."

"And does Theo give you any other news?" for my uncle did not find Dosey a palatable name, and so always called Lady Paulett Theo.

"Only an account of a great ball at ——— House; and of all people who on earth should be there but Lady Hamilton. 'Pon my soul, I don't know what the world will come to." Don José enunciated this query with particular disgust; for it is a remarkable fact that no men are so tenacious of public morals, and so censorious upon the *lèze morale* of others, as your professed *roués* and unblushing profligates.

"Nay," said my uncle indignantly, "considering what eminent services she rendered our Government, and that the English, with all their *soi-disant* morality, as long as Nelson was there to gild her vice with his glory, used to invite them to their country-houses—most conjugally together!—which, indeed, I think they might as well have left alone, it would be a little too coarsely heartless even for our *haute volée* were they

suddenly to drop her the moment the halo has passed away, if the vice did not appal them while it existed. Surely, it cannot contaminate them now that it has ceased? but two years ago I began to perceive the moral re-action, as even then the once deified Lady Hamilton was beginning to be much neglected; and when this nice morality reaches its culminating point, I have no doubt she will be totally so. Had our censors of society turned their backs upon her in the plenitude of her power and the zenith of her beauty, to have upheld and consoled the woman she had injured (poor Lady Nelson), while I pitied Lady Hamilton for deserving it, I should have admired the just severity of public opinion; but any posthumous moral qualms that the world may now put forth I cannot but look upon as heartless and contemptible in the highest degree, as I do upon the Government for not having yet* provided for Nelson's last bequest to his country, his daughter Horatia, whom I have reason to know is not Lady Hamilton's daughter.

"Still, my dear uncle," said the moral Don José, with the air of a Cato, "we must consider what is due to our wives and daughters; and if such women as Lady Hamilton—"

"The best way of doing that, in my opinion," interrupted my uncle, looking with a sort of stern contempt

* *Yet!* this yet was in 1812, and has continued to 1850! What a pity the interest of it has not accumulated like that of the other national debt!

over his shoulder at his nephew, as he backed his chair and turned it slightly on one side; "the best way of doing that, my dear Joseph, is to respect other men's wives and daughters."

Don José not appearing to relish this plan, merely shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Well, I think it's only in the present day there could be such a laxity of moral tone, as to tolerate such women in society."

"My uncle, who probably remembered better than his nephew could possibly do the peculiar circumstances attending the marriage of Don José's mother, replied somewhat warmly:

"I beg your pardon, my dear Joseph, I hate cant, especially that hereditary cant of always setting facts at defiance, by making out the present age, for the time being, the worst. Mrs. Oldfield for instance, in the last age, who was alternately the mistress of Mainwaring and General Churchill (nor did her immoralities stop there by any means), was not only received, but *fêtée'd* in society, and was borne to her grave by Lords Harvey and Delawarr, and Bubb Doddington, and her ashes rest with those of the mighty dead in Westminster Abbey. And some forty years before this, an archbishop—the Archbishop of Canterbury—preached Nell Gwynne's funeral sermon; and later again, Ann Catley, after being the talk of the town, married a general officer, and was received with open arms in the highest circles. So much, without specify-

ing the court, the bench, and the bar, for the past purity of the *Humbugences*, as I certainly think we English deserve to be called; and if I don't greatly mistake, the first overflowing of the moral tide in England took place from private pique upon the 'lands, tenements, and messuages' of Mrs. Billington, the actress, and in the case of the unfortunate Princess of Wales, for I never heard that even a single bubble of its spray incommoded Ladies J——y, H——d, and others."

And my uncle slapped down the lid of his snuff-box in conclusion rather more energetically than usual, while Sir Joseph merely shrugged his shoulders, and said:

"*Quant à cela*, my dear uncle, I can do nothing in all that."

"Very likely," said my uncle, "and that makes me of the same opinion as Pliny's facetious friend, 'Satius est otiosum, esse quam nihil agere,'* a maxim I make you a present of, Joseph, against your next trip to Spain; and so saying my uncle rose, and we adjourned to the other room, all except Don José, who, I am happy to say, thought his company might be better appreciated elsewhere, and therefore left us to feel his loss by the great relief it afforded us.

* It is better to be idle than to do nothing.

CHAPTER X.

No sooner had Don José departed, the jingling of coffee-spoons subsided and the Duc de Bouillon filled one *causeuse*, the two O'Donnells, Bloom Belzoni, and Grace the opposite one, on the other side of the fire, and my Uncle Paulett seated himself on the ottoman before it, than I clambered up beside him with the assistance of Mr. Waltham, who was sitting in an easy-chair next him, and, putting my arm round my uncle's neck, and giving him a sonorous kiss, I said:

"Now, dear uncle, for a story."

"Well, what is it to be?"

"Do you know any stories about giants?"

"No, Ma'am, I do not. I am a stupid old fellow, and can only tell you of what I have seen; and there are no giants in these days, neither were there many in mine."

Mary O'Donnell suggested that we should hear the story of Richard the Third, which we had not yet heard."

"Is that the crook-backed Richard in my little History of England, that used to kill children in the Tower?" asked I.

"Ay, and his nephews, too. How should you like such an uncle as that, Mirry?" asked the Duke.

"Not at all; but then I shouldn't like any uncle but the one I've got;" and I stood up, and kissed and patted my uncle's nice white head, as if it had been Pomba's, at the risk of powdering my own.

"Let Uncle Paulett tell us the story about Richard the Third, Mirry, which he can't do if you tease him," said Grace.

"My child, it is scarcely a story," replied my uncle, "but merely that I have heard my grandfather say, that his grandfather knew old Lady Desmond, who lived till one hundred and ten, and that she remembered when a very young girl, having danced with Richard the Third, who so far from his being hump-backed as history has handed him down to us, was one of the handsomest and most agreeable men about court, and had no other defect than the reputation of a withered arm, which not being visible was believed or not, according to the inclination of those who heard it."

"Oh! will you tell us, Sir George, about your visit to Mrs. Bunbury's when Goldsmith was there, and

Garrick, and that beautiful Mary Hornock that he was in love with," asked Bloom Belzoni.

"Nay, and that was in love with him, too," cried my uncle; "for as General Gwyn can't hear me, and perhaps poor Goldsmith can, I am sure his spirit will soar and expand into a higher and wider beatitude every time that truth is confided to the elements to mingle with the universal spirit of nature, and add harmony to sound, brightness to light, and perfume to the flowers—those poor flowers that he used to scatter so unmercifully around him wherever he went, as if his thoughts were too luxuriant, and needed this kind of thinning. Poor Goldsmith!"

"Who was Goldsmith?" asked I.

"He was," said my uncle, walking over to one of the *marqueterie secrétaires*, unlocking it, and taking from one of the pigeon-holes a little book with a fine flaring cover of blue and gold flowers, both laid on thickly and in patches, like the decoration of those toys peculiar to booths at a fair; "he was a most, if not *the* most good-natured man (not excepting his own) that ever existed, and was the idol of every child that came in his way."

"Then I suppose he was like you," interrupted I.

"Ah! I wish I were like him, Mirry; but here is a little book he gave me for my poor sister Mary the Christmas I met him at Bolton. And see," continued my uncle, showing me the title-page, but not letting

the book out of his own hand, "here is what he wrote on it, and in a fine round hand, too, that she might be able to read it:"

"TO MISS MARY PAULETT,

"FROM HER BROTHER GEORGE'S FRIEND,

"OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

"Bolton,
"December 25th, 1774."

"Oh! Grace," cried I, clapping my hands, it's

"Goody Two Shoes!"

"Did Goldsmith write Goody Two Shoes?" asked Grace.

"It is supposed that he did," said my uncle, "but he did not tell me so when he gave it to me, and I never saw him after we left Bolton; for, poor fellow, he died soon after, I verily believe gnawed to the soul, and worried to death, by debts the amount of which was so trifling—two thousand pounds I fancy, or something of that sort—that it seems to me a disgrace to his friends not to have hit upon some expedient to raise the money for him without offending his pride, or wounding his delicacy. I think both Johnson and the Bunburys would, had they known their amount; and to his credit be it spoken, I often heard 'The Captain in Lace,' as the Horneck girls used to call

their brother, say that he would have sold his commission rather than poor Goldsmith should have let two beggarly thousand pounds break so fine a heart. Had he known of it, Beauclerc might easily have done it, if he pleased, through Goldsmith's admirers in the higher circles; but then Beauclerc had no heart, and with him no doubt, as with most of the world, the mere fact of a man's being in difficulties was the best proof that he deserved to be so.

"Cradock, it is true, did originate the idea of re-publishing Goldsmith's works by subscription, to give his aristocratic admirers an opportunity of testifying their golden opinions of him; but unfortunately this idea was conceived too late, and executed too slowly; so that poor Goldsmith died in the meantime. A lesson to you, my dear children, that when you mean to serve, if you would really save, you should never delay for a single moment. The longer evil intentions are delayed the better, for then they may chance to die in embryo, and never become actions; but to postpone good ones till their fruition is rendered useless or impossible is to swindle Providence who has intrusted you with one of its most divine attributes, the power of changing sorrow into joy."

"And where is your sister Mary now?" replied I.

"In heaven," replied my uncle.

"You have a snuff-box, have you not, Sir, made out of Goldsmith's hawthorn!" asked Mary O'Donnell.

"I have, dear," said my uncle, again going to the

same cabinet, and opening one of the drawers, which he left half open; and bringing back a round, brownish-looking, wooden box—not however flat, but like a cake of shaving soap, lined with gold, and having a golden lid—with an inscription, describing the day and year it was cut from the hawthorn-tree at Lissoy, namely, June the 14th, 1794, with this couplet from the "Deserted Village" round it:

> "The hawthorn tree with seats beneath the shade,
> For talking age and whispering lovers made."

While we were all looking at the box, my uncle looked at the fire, and sighed; and then, stroking his chin, he said:

"But I'm forgetting that my little friend Bloom, asked me to take her back to Bolton with me. Well, I must first ask my father and mother's leave—for you must know I was only sixteen at that time, and it was as a great favour I was taken myself; but I had been ill with the hooping-cough, and our house in Soho Square was to be painted,—people lived in Soho Square in those days,—and my poor mother, who was always clever at inventing pretexts to give any of us pleasure, said it would make me ill again, if I remained in it; and as she had got an invitation from Little Comedy, as they used to call young Mrs. Bunbury, for all the children to spend the Christmas at Bolton, surely she might take *one*, as my brothers and sisters were to pass the Christmas with my grandmother.

"My father at first opposed this; but Sir Charles Bunbury happening to drop in while the matter was under discussion, he joined forces with my mother and me, and so we carried the day. Well, it's now the 15th of December, 1774," (and here my uncle sighed again, but suddenly rousing himself, he added), "and bitterly cold; so we must stir the fire to warm ourselves, before we set out upon our long journey into Suffolk;" and he suited the action to the word, while we all gathered round him, like a cluster of bees on the outside of a hive. "Mother," resumed he, with his dear, kind, playful eyes looking from one to the other of us, and lowering his voice to a whisper, "may Bloom Belzoni go with us down to Bolton? She is a very good little girl, and a particular friend of mine, and is so reasonable, that I'm sure she won't crowd up the coach with too many bandboxes and jiggamarees; and, between you and me, mother, I think she'll be very useful, for she hems and marks pocket-handkerchiefs beautifully; and with this weather I think we are likely to have colds in our heads, so goodness knows how many pocket-handkerchiefs we may want; therefore, as I said before, she will be extremely useful.

"'Oh, fie; for shame, George; I am shocked to think that you should invite a yonng lady to make a sempstress of her; where's your gallantry? You really are not fit for polite company; and I'm sorry now I ordered that changeable silk coat for you at Filby's, for

silks and satins are far too delicate wear for young bears.'

"'Oh, mother, mother, only forgive me this once, and I'll turn the bear out of my menagerie, and be as polite to pretty Bloom Belzoni, as if I were a birth-night beau, and she as fine a lady as Lady Fanny Tiffany, and didn't know how to hem a pocket-handkerchief.'"

Highly amused at this San Carlino dialogue by one person, we all laughed aloud, not excepting Mr. Waltham; while our fat friend from the sofa cried:

"Bravo! bravo! My dear Sir George, your good lady mother was right, and you too."

"If I'm right, I shan't be left; so make haste, Bloom, for the coach is at the door.

"Well, Ma'am, in those days," continued my uncle, "it was the fashion to drive four-in-hand, and so my father was to drive us down himself to Bolton. I think, taking it all in all, perhaps this was the happiest day of my life; for I had intimated to my uncle, Pallisser, a brother of my mother's, who was my godfather, and after whom I was called George, that any 'little accounts' he might have to settle in the way of Christmas Boxes, I hoped he would do so before I left town, as I should not be in the way of profiting by his generosity on Christmas Day. My poor uncle Pallisser!—no one was quicker in taking these sort of hints, or had a more munificent manner of showing

that he did so; two excellent qualities, you will allow, young ladies in an uncle."

"Yes, that you have proved to us every day since we came," said Grace.

"Bravo! bravo! *bonne petite!*" again burst from the Duke, who, being in the habit of eking out his compliments to my Aunt Marley with florid quotations, added:

"And truths divine come mended from those lips."

My uncle merely drew Grace towards him, kissed her, and continued his narration.

"Well, the result of these hints were, that the night before we left town for Bolton a beautiful Tompion (Tompion, you must know, my dears, was the great watch-maker at that time) came for me, of purple enamel, with my initials in brilliants on the back. My changeable silk coat (the first I'd ever had) had also come home punctually, and was packed up; and I had succeeded in coaxing my mother out of a pair of ruffles, so that I thought myself, and consequently was, the happiest fellow in the world. It is true, that there was no possible means of grinding a sword out of my father, who said, that in three years I was to join the 14th Light Dragoons, and then I'd have swords enough.

"This certainly was a drawback to my perfect happiness, when I came to dwell upon the splendours

of my approaching appearance at Bolton, for at that time there was no such thing as a perfectly spruce blade without a sword. However, again my poor dear mother stepped in with the compensations of a sky-blue cloth great coat, lined with fur, braided with gold, and faced with scarlet, which one would fancy like a footman's livery now, but which then was considered, not only by myself and my own family in particular, but by the world in general, all to nothing the finest part of the affair, not excepting a three-cornered gold-laced hat, for which my mother had lent me three of her own corking pins, that it might be cocked the more jauntily. The journey seemed interminable, and would have been thought still more so in these days of quick posting; though if looking at my watch, my beautiful blue Tompion, could have expedited it, we should have got to the end of it in half the time; for upon an average, every five minutes I produced that treasure, announcing that it was such and such o'clock by *me*, and of course it was the same for everybody else, even if they hadn't a Tompion!—a fact which at that time I totally overlooked.

"However, at eleven o'clock of the forenoon of Christmas Eve, we drove up the avenue at Bolton, on the hall steps of which stood a group composed of Mrs. Bunbury; her sister, the beautiful Mary Horneck, the Jessamy Bride, as they called her; Bunbury; Lord and Lady Tyrconnel: Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine; George Hanger; Lord Harrington; a Mr.

and Mrs. Mauleverer; and another personage in a black silk coat, wringing wet, at whom the whole party were laughing vociferously, while Lady Tyrconnell was warbling in that nightingale voice of hers:

"'Oh! dear, what can the matter be?
Dear, dear, what can the matter be?'

which was then a manuscript song, not published for some years after. But when I said the whole party were laughing at this poor half-drowned personage, I should have excepted one, which was Mary Horneck, who was clasping her pretty little white hands together, and saying to this river-god:

"'Pray, pray, Doctor, do go and take off those wet things, or you'll get your death of cold.'

At this, the Doctor coloured slightly, but seemed much pleased as he glanced for less than half an instant at the beautiful speaker and then said:

"'I will go directly and change my things, for really I am like a water-spaniel, and I shall spoil these ladies' brocades, as I fear I have done this one already.'

"This was addressed to my mother, who had just alighted, and a few drops from the speaker's coat had certainly fallen on her dress.

"'Nay,' said she, turning round with a bow and a smile, 'Dr. Goldsmith can only embellish whatever he touches; and I shall now prize this suit so highly, that I shall never part with it.'

"'Madam,' stammered Goldsmith, bowing and blushing, but he could get no further; however, he paid my mother a most charming compliment that night at supper, which she was wont most indignantly to maintain, against all the ready wits of the day, had lost nothing from being so long in his possession,

"'Oh! dear, what can the matter be?'

again sang Lady Tyrconnell, by way of interrogation, as the drenched poet retreated into the house.

"'Why,' said Lord Harrington, stepping forward, 'the matter is this, we were walking just now by the fish-pond at the other side of the maze, when a discussion arose as to its depth; the greater number were for the profound, three or four for the shallow, and among the latter, Miss Mary Horneck. Dr. Goldsmith inclined to her opinion, and indeed,' continued Lord Harrington, looking archly at the Jessamy Bride, 'one cannot be surprised at any man's soon being over head and ears where Miss Mary Horneck is concerned; the consequence was, that the Doctor affirmed that the pond was not so deep, but that were anything of value thrown into it, he would get it out without wetting himself; thus dared, I flung in a guinea, *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*;' and here Lord Harrington again cast an arch look at Mary Horneck; 'so in trying to fish it out, the poor Doctor's foot slipped, and he flung himself in, but brought

back the guinea, which he vowed he'd keep for his pains, having, he said, plenty of objects to bestow all similar coin upon, he would bring out as many more as I chose to fling in; but I thought our foolish partnership about the pond had been sufficiently liquidated, and knowing that Dr. Goldsmith was the last man in the world to wish to throw a damp upon a Christmas party, I thought it right to rest satisfied with the prowess he had already evinced.' Mary Horneck had vanished at Lord Harrington's second look.

"Lady Tyrconnell laughed at the history of poor Goldsmith's misfortunes; and soon after, the party entered the house, and dispersed in different directions; but as I and my mother were going up stairs to our rooms, conducted by Mrs. Bunbury, the latter said to the housekeeper, whom she met coming out of the room that had been prepared for my mother: 'Moffat, pray send a hot posset to Dr. Goldsmith's room, will you, immediately, for he's got wet through.'

"'What! another Ma'am? because Miss Horneck came herself, and ordered one for him not ten minutes ago, and he's had that one.'

"'Oh, very well,' said Mrs. Bunbury with a laugh, 'I'm glad the poor Doctor has not been neglected.'

"I was afraid I should be the last down to dinner, and was frightened when I heard the clock strike three; nevertheless, one's first chamelion coat was not to be jumped into as one would into a bath. So after

Lawrence (my father's man) had held a glass at my back sufficiently long for me to be perfectly sure that the coat had not a wrinkle in it, I ran down hastily into my mother's room to steal some perfume for my handkerchief; and, as I was coming out again, I heard an opposite door open, delighted to think that after all I should not be the last, I paused to see who my fellow laggard was; it was Goldsmith, beating me hollow, in a magnificent coat of bloom velvet (so you see he wore your livery, Bloom,) and redolent of *bouquet de jasmin*, with which he quite embalmed the air; and I have had a latent *tendresse* for that perfume ever since, and always tell Grant to put jessamine pomatum on my hair.

"There was something wrong about his sword-knot, which he still lingered to settle; and indeed I must do him the justice to say that although I had always heard Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and indeed all the men who came to my father's (with the exception of Burke) rate him for a sloven, I never saw any maccaroni, as they were then called, or dandy as we should call them now, appear so scrupulously punctilious about his dress. When the sword-knot was got right (though it never kept so), I went up to him, and said:

"'I hope, Sir, you don't feel any ill effects from your accident?'

"'None whatever, I thank you, my little master; the only sufferer on the occasion is my black silk coat,

which has lost its ruffles; and I confess I am sorry for it, as I possessed but two pairs, and those happened to be the best of the two.'

"I tried to suggest the consolation that they might still be found in the vicinity of the pond; but Goldsmith shook his head, for the use of experience to most persons is to teach them to despair of everything, by which means alone they may be numbered among the blessed, and are never disappointed. We then went down to dinner, where Goldsmith was much confused to find the meal had been some little time commenced; and began stammering out his regrets, and apologies, for being the last.

"'Extremes meet you know, Doctor,' said Lord Harrington with his usual good-breeding; 'and that fully accounts for the first man of the age being last.'

"This well-timed, and well-merited compliment put poor Goldsmith completely at his ease; and the dinner passed off delightfully, at least to me, as Goldsmith, who called me his fellow-culprit, insisted upon my sitting next to him; and before the following day we grew to be exceeding great friends, what with a joint-stock cheating partnership at Pope Joan, and a mutual favouring of each other in the bandaging at blind man's buff, wherein, I'm sorry to say, I very meanly more than once, when Goldsmith was blind man, pushed Mary Horneck in the way of being caught, in order to save myself; all the others cried shame, and

fair play, the Jessamy Bride louder than any one, but Goldsmith said nothing, and therefore I suppose that he thought all I had done was for the best.

"My poor mother seemed not a little proud of the sort of fancy the Doctor had taken to me, and I was never tired of expatiating upon the downright affection I had conceived for him; so that that very night, as I kissed my mother on taking leave of her at her own door, I informed her with much sympathy (for what should I have done, if it had been my own case?) of the loss of Goldsmith's best ruffles.

"'Dear me, poor fellow, I'm sorry to hear that; and Heaven only knows what they cost him,' said my mother, and then after reflecting for a moment, she said, 'I'll tell you what, George, depend upon it he don't know one sort of lace from another, and will never remember the pattern. So I'll give you a pair of your father's best point ones, and to-morrow morning, you shall get up early, and pretend you have found them by the pond; for which reason you must go and dip them into it before you take them to him, for you must not for the world let him suspect that we are taking such a liberty with him as to give him a pair of ruffles, as that would offend him. Poverty being the most painfully tender of all wounds, the least want of skill, in trying to heal it, only irritates past endurance.'

"'Mother,' cried I, hugging her with all the energy of the bear, which I had so recently promised to expel

from my *ménagerie*, 'you are a dear, good, little woman; and I only hope you will one day have as much reason to love and be proud of your son, as he has of his mother.'

"'Take care, my dear,' said my father, now coming to the door to join the debate; 'take care the Doctor don't find you out.'

"For a moment my mother seemed undecided, and then turning to me, she said:

"'You are quite sure, George, that he said they were his best ruffles!'

"'Quite sure.'

"'Oh! then they must have been *point d'Alençon*, so we are quite safe,' said my mother, going over to a chair upon which lay a brown velvet coat of my father's, all ready prepared for church the next day, with a very magnificent pair of ruffles, which she deliberately untacked.

"My father had quietly re-seated himself by the fire, and before a table, covered with numerous Parliamentary papers and letters from his constituents.

"'You won't mind, shall you, my dear, going without point ruffles till after church to-morrow?' said my mother to him, as she put the ones she had just taken off into my hand.

"'Not in the least, my dear, I shall have all the less on my hands,' rejoined my father, with a groan, as he broke the seal of another letter; and again kissing my mother, I shut the door. The next morning before it

was well light found me at the pond, where having given the ruffles a cold and muddy bath, I waited till my Tompion announced that it was half-past six, and then thinking it better to finish the business before there were any prying or prating servants about, I went and knocked gently at Goldsmith's door: 'Come in,' said he, but not in a sleepy voice proceeding from the bed. Early as it was he was up, and writing away very fast by a consumptive-looking over-night's fire, and, notwithstanding the cold of the season, he had a wet towel wisped round his head, which he hastily removed on seeing me, and this gave me an opportunity of remarking what a splendid head he had, which no one would have ever suspected from the abominable wig he generally wore.

"'God bless my soul, my dear Master George, is that you?' said he, laying down his pen.

"'I have to beg you a thousand pardons, Doctor, for intruding upon you at such an unseasonable hour; but the fact is, I had a strong notion (as I told you yesterday) that your ruffles would be found, if properly looked for. So I got up a little earlier and went myself in quest of them, and sure enough, after a little close hunting, I found them only a little the worse for their lengthened swim.'

"Goldsmith's eyes positively sparkled as he received the wet rags, and I doubt if I had brought him the news of his being appointed to a sinecure of a thousand

a-year, whether he could have looked more del
or expressed more gratitude.

"'My dear Master George, well now how
you, and to get up on purpose, too; really, m
young friend, I am more obliged to you than
say;' and he shook me by both hands. 'You
know,' he resumed, 'the service you have done
I should be ashamed to tell you what those ruff
me; and to go and lose them directly after
bought them, was exactly like paying even t
much again for them; dear me, I am so g
to you; and how singular that you shoul
found them,—one of the most extraordinar
fortunate events that ever happened to me:
can I ever do to show you how much I fee
kindness?'

"'I am sure, Sir, you have thanked me a gre
too much already,' said I; 'but if you would wri
name in my copy of "The Deserted Village," I
be so proud.'

"'No, not in your copy, but in all my works
think them worth having, and will accept the
me; and I must not forget your little sister,
said he; and walking over to a chair upon whic
an old black pormanteau, and fishing up fi
depths that very identical copy of "Goody Two
which I showed you to-night, and bringing it
table, he wrote in it what you have seen, murmu

he did so, 'A pretty, gentle name is that of Mary; may all who bear it know no other tears!'*

"It was now my turn to lavish my thanks, and I felt so grateful that I had no difficulty in doing so.

"'Not another word, my dear Master George,' said he, cutting me short, 'remember the ruffles; but as you seemed destined to come to my assistance you could render me another service, that is if I have not already given you a surfeit of 'Deserted Villages?'

"'If they were all like Auburn, that would not be easy, Sir.'

"'I am afraid you are a flatterer, young Sir; well, never mind, no one is quite perfection, and a lucky thing too, or else the greater part of the world might consider themselves most shamefully defrauded; but, my dear Master George,' continued he, gathering up the written papers that were strewing the table, and locking them into the old portmanteau, 'what I want you to do for me is, to come with me to a village, about a mile from this, before breakfast, for either before or after church, I shall not be able to manage it; the fact is' and he lowered his voice as if he had been revealing treason, 'a poor girl that I met yesterday, when we were all walking on the high road, told me such a piteous tale of her mother who had had her arm broken by a loom falling upon it, and afterwards amputated, and who consequently was out of work,

* Mary, in Hebrew, means a tear.

and worse still, had not even any old linen for bandages, that I have been uncomfortable ever since, for I did not like to give her money before them all, because Dr. Johnson, who is very kind to me, has put it into Mrs. Bunbury's head that I am extravagant, and do things that I have no right to do,—for that is one of the delights of poverty, it becomes, or at least is made, a fault and a reproach to help one's fellow-creatures; but you see, my dear Master George, the case is now quite altered, I have got my Lord Harrington's guinea, and as I told him I should keep it to give it to those who wanted it, it would be unpardonable in me not to take it to this poor Jenny Croft—for that's her name, I wrote it down in my pocket-book; and if you will come with me, they will think we have only been to take a walk before breakfast, and won't ask me any questions.'

"'With the greatest pleasure, Sir,' said I.

"'Thank you, my good Master George, thank you;' and Goldsmith began to dress, first of all, however, shaking out the wet ruffles, and hanging them on a chair before the fire to dry: ''Pon my word,' said he, 'although they are all muddy, some how or other they look to me even handsomer than they were before.'

"'Oh, you know, Sir,' said I, fearing he might examine them too minutely and suspect something, 'they wash point in coffee very often, so perhaps the slight tinge of mud may have improved them.'

"'Ah, like enough,' said he, and he gave the ruffles another shake.

"'If you would allow me, Sir,' I said, 'I think I had better take them to my mother's woman, and she will wash them properly for you, and they would be ready for you to put on to go to church.'

"'My dear Master George, how kind you are: I shall be exceedingly obliged to you; but I fear my poor black silk coat is entirely spoilt,' added he, taking it up with a sigh, and at the same time putting aside two of four shirts that lay on a chair next the one off of which he had taken the coat, and muttering: 'Ay, I must not forget to take linen to that poor woman,' he flung the coat down.

"'Nay, Sir,' said I, 'if you would allow me also to take your coat, I've no doubt Patty will be able to make it look quite smart again, for she often works miracles on my father's coats; and as my mother never stirs from home without old linen enough to supply an hospital, it will be a pity to take those good shirts of yours, which indeed would not do so well for bandages as if they were worse.'

"'Oh! I don't know how to thank you—you really are so kind,' said he, again shaking me by both hands, as, not waiting for further permission, I seized the coat, and was about to leave the room with it. 'And you will be still kinder, my dear Master George,' said he, before I closed the door, 'and not mention our

going to see this poor woman to any one; though, as I told you before, it is Lord Harrington's money; but all the world don't know this, and things get about so, and I shall have nothing but lectures when I get back to town.'

"I promised the strictest secrecy, and went in quest of Patty with the shrivelled coat and the wet ruffles. She assured me that sponging with lavender water and ironing would restore the one, and soap and water the other; and having given me a plentiful supply of old linen, I returned to Goldsmith with the good news. Never shall I forget the beaming expression of his face: I could not have imagined that ugliness could have been suddenly lit up into such beauty; but I suppose it was that it looked heavenly, there being more joy in it over the recovery of this one lost coat, than he would have evinced at ninety-nine new ones. As he was now dressed, we set out to the little village, the name of which I forget, but it was barely a mile from Bolton; and in a wretched hovel, stretched upon a miserable flock bed, lay the poor old woman, groaning from the pain of her amputated arm; while her daughter was on her knees, before the large old chimney, down which all the winds of heaven came, trying with her mouth to do the duty of a bellows, and blow a few sticks of churlish green wood into a flame.

"'Here, my good woman,' said Goldsmith, ad-

vancing to the bed, and holding out the guinea, 'a good gentleman, my Lord Harrington, has sent you this. I could not give your daughter anything, when she asked me yesterday; not from want of pity for you, but because I had not got it; and this kind young gentleman here has brought you plenty of linen: so though I can do nothing for you, you see God has raised you up other friends, both willing and able to serve you.'

"'May God Almighty bless you, Sir!' said the poor woman, rightly surmising to whom she really owed this relief.

"'What does your mother take?' asked Goldsmith of the girl.

"'She have only took a little grule, Sir: the doctor due say that she should have woine tue; but wheere be she to get woine?' said the girl in her Suffolk twang.

"After asking her a few more questions, we went away, Goldsmith telling her he would see her again. As we returned through the village, the sun burst forth in all his splendour; and it struck me at the time that the sun must put on an additional glory when he shines on such men as Goldsmith.

"When we regained the high road to Bolton, I was stepping out in seven-league-boot style, my beloved Tompion having informed me that it only wanted a quarter to nine, when my companion suddenly stopped and looking wistfully up at a little road-side alehouse,

where swung a faded sign, under which was written, in once-gold letters:

"'THE OLD WHITE HORSE.'

And sure enough very old the poor fellow looked, while above him protruded a withered bush.

"'My dear Master George,' said Goldsmith, hesitating and colouring, as if he had been confiding to me his intention of robbing a house, and begging me to assist him, 'I— I— just want to go in here; I shan't be a minute.'

"Not having been interdicted, I followed.

"'Landlord," said Goldsmith to mine host of the Old White Horse, who was smoking his pipe in the wide chimney-corner, opposite to an elderly dame, who sat reading the Bible, and who, I suppose, was the Old Grey Mare, 'do you happen to have any good old wine?'

"'Ay, that due I, thof my place bent none of your foine taverns loike, to luke at.'

"'Well, then, quick; a bottle of your best sack, and another of port.'

"'The landlord put down his pipe, stood up, and began rummaging in all his pockets; but suddenly stopped, saying:

"'Dang it, I forgot my missus due keep the kay. Dame, hand over the kay of the cellar.'

"In a few minutes, he returned with a couple of

bottles, whose cobwebs and flakes of mildew stood sponsors for their antiquity. The dame having carefully dusted them, and wrapped them in two half-sheets of an old number of 'The Hue and Cry,' Goldsmith tendered a guinea to the host, which this time certainly was no one else's, but one of poor Oliver Goldsmith's own hard-earned guineas. No wonder, then, that he looked so confused and ashamed; for there is an ease about spending other people's money which we never can attain to in disbursing our own. The landlord gave him ten shillings in change, which, however, I remarked he did not put into his pocket, but kept in his hand with one of the bottles, while I took charge of the other.

"'Come, my dear Master George,' said he, as we left The White Horse, 'or we shall be late;' and he set off running, and I of course with him, at the speed of a school-boy who had just robbed an orchard, and heard the owner at his heels, and we never drew breath till we got to Jenny Croft's cottage, which we did not enter, Goldsmith merely giving her daughter the wine, and adding in a whisper not intended for me to hear, as he poked the remaining ten shillings into her hand: 'There, and when this wine is gone you can get more at 'The White Horse.'

"As we reached the old oak entrance-hall at Bolton, the first breakfast-bell was only beginning to ring.

"'Come, that is famous,' cried Goldsmith, 'we can get back to our rooms and they never will even know

that we have been out.' I accompanied him as far as his, where I don't know which of us was most delighted to find that Patty had been as good as her word, or indeed, rather better; for on the newly-made bed was laid, 'in all the pride of beauty, and in beauty's pride,' the black silk coat, which had been 'laid up in lavender' to some purpose, for what with the ruffles again in all their glory, it really did look as Goldsmith said, 'even better than before its ducking really,' said he, gazing at it with a sort of admiring tenderness.

"'I am very much obliged to Mrs. Patty; and will you, my dear Master George, tell her so, and give her this from me?'

"The this, was another guinea; oh! the bad taste of gold, it never will stay with people like Goldsmith, no doubt from envy, as I suppose it is afraid of being out-shone, whereas it certainly runs no such risk in the coffers of the selfish and the worldly, where it delighteth to dwell.

"'Indeed, my dear Doctor, I cannot do any such thing, it is against the law; you would not wish poor Patty to lose her place I'm sure, and my mother would turn her off directly if she found out that she had ever taken money from any one; and if you give her this, I shall make it a point to tell my mother, though I'm sure Patty would not take it.'

"'Oh! but she has done so much for me—saved me six guineas; for the coat, though a new one, was quite spoilt till she restored it, and really—'

"'And really, my dear Doctor,' said I, interrupting him, 'you must not think of giving her anything for having rendered you this trifling service, unless you want to do her an injury.'

"'Heaven forbid!' said Goldsmith.

"'There, Doctor, there goes the second bell, and we shall be late for breakfast after all,' said I, hurrying off, to give Patty timely notice that I should not only tell my mother, but would shoot her! if any of Dr. Goldsmith's guineas were found straying in her pockets.

"During the whole of the breakfast, I had to undergo Goldsmith's public thanks and commendations, for my kindness in finding his ruffles; and, I'm sorry to say it, but that mother of mine must have been a most artful woman, for she looked as innocent all the time as if I had really been the paragon of finders that the Doctor described, and *she* had never haggled and bargained with Madame Clarisseaus of 'The Golden Pillow' in Pall-Mall, to get those identical ruffles for five shillings a-yard less for her own lawful husband, who was then despatching a very substantial segment of a swan-pie, in a pair of plain Mechlin ones, though happily not with less appetite on that account.

"The church being about half a mile distant, after breakfast, carriages came to the door to convey the elders thither, while the younger members of the party preferred walking. Goldsmith was certainly old enough to know better, but somehow or other he also was among the pedestrians; and, as no one else had the

civility to do so, he was of course obliged to offer his arm to Mary Horneck, which she accepted, with as much alacrity, grace, and good-humour, as if it had been that of the youngest and handsomest maccaroni that ever frequented the Mall. The bells were ringing; the village church had on its holiday gear, and a smile actually seemed to play upon the old walls, wreathed as they were in the festive greenery of holly and red berries. On entering the porch, Goldsmith released Mary Horneck's arm; yet was it from abstraction, or that she really looked so like a Jessamy Bride I know not, but he was walking straight on to the altar, when the parish beadle tapped him on the shoulder and pointed to the open door of Mr. Bunbury's curtained and escutcheoned pew. But so it is, with every sweet illusion that either hope, or imagination, or even memory—the truest of all—conjures up around us; we no sooner advance one step in the poetical Elysium, than some parish beadle of a reality taps us on the shoulder and brings us back to the common-place prose of existence. Poor Goldsmith, thus admonished by rude reality, turned from the altar, and followed Mary Horneck into the pew, holding his hat before his face. I have heard of persons trying to get to heaven by tacking themselves on to the skirts of others, and I suppose that is the reason I knelt so close to Goldsmith on that day; however, he soon distanced me in the journey, for he reached the goal before the following Christmas; and I am still here, while some others of his contemporaries

ur party, for Garrick, who had been staying
stol's I think, or at least somewhere in
irhood, had come over to Bolton. Before
ing was proposed, but I remarked that by
we avoided the pond, and at length found
the hot-house, or as Garrick said, rubbing
entering: 'Ah! there is some sense in
ote that now we have arrived at Naples, we
seizing a large flat root basket he laid him-
rather curled himself up in it, and with
a brown silk shawl of Mrs. Mauleverer's,
azzarone to such perfection, that those who
Naples instinctively looked round for the
he Bay and those who had not, began to
eat, till we all burst into one vociferous
ile 'Bravissimo! Homo miracoloso! genio
urst from Lord Harrington. Unfortunately,
tience to watch the expression, or rather
sence of all expression in Garrick's face,
lay like an inert mass of animal life
o seed under a meridian sun. I upset a

one at a time, large and slowly, down his frost-bitten face, we again all caught the infection, our teeth not only beginning to chatter, but some of us actually sneezing. But seeing my consternation over the scattered blossoms, and thinking he had iced us enough, considering we had to inhale a little real frost before we got back to the house, he slapped me on the shoulder, and said:

"'Pooh, boy, never fret at such a trifle; you've only to come away and leave it, and the gardener will swear it's Goldsmith's handy-work.'

"'I suppose, Mr. Garrick, you want to turn my brain, by making me believe that any work of my boy's could ever be taken for Dr. Goldsmith's,' said my mother.

"'Ah, Davey, how am I to thank you for procuring me such a compliment from such a lady, to say nothing of giving me the opportunity of hearing it?'

"I have no doubt that Goldsmith here alluded to the £60 Garrick had lent him to come down to Bolton, on the strength of a comedy to be written; for Goldsmith's was not one of those narrow natures whose pride consists in making a secret of obligations he was not too proud to receive; indeed, for my own part, I always suspect that those persons who affect the independence of preferring any amount of misery to accepting assistance from their fellow-creatures, are merely those sort of sordid dispositions that cannot bear to assist others in their distress, otherwise the

proceeding would appear more natural and less humiliating to them; for, after all, they are only giving their neighbour the opportunity of obeying one of our Saviour's most express commandments, and also of doing their duty in that state of life into which it has pleased God to call them.

"However, there might be a sort of spurious and mistaken virtue in this rigid independence did they act up to their theory, which they do not; for such persons seem to consider with Tartufe, that *pêcher en secret n'est pas pêcher, ce n'est que l'éclat qui fait le crime;* and therefore deem that borrowing to any amount (and even never repaying it), or accepting any species of obligation as long as it is *not known,* does not in the least derogate from their dignity, or humiliate their pride. I own, that there cannot be too scrupulous a delicacy and secrecy maintained touching all obligations conferred, whether pecuniary or other, only the secrecy should be on the part of the *obliger,* and not on that of the *obliged.* The person who is not too proud to accept a service, should not be too mean (for it is meanness and not pride) to acknowledge it."

"But don't you think, Sir," said Mr. Waltham, "that it is a want of proper pride to burden one's friends with one's necessities, instead of making a strong and persevering appeal to one's own energies to work one's self out of them?"

"Most certainly I do, Sir, and that man, woman,

or child, who indolently prefers help to labour, that is, who would rather meanly tax others than exert themselves, is a contemptible reptile. But, my dear Sir, there are cases, and God knows we have seen plenty of them lately among the poor *émigrés*, where the best blood of France is ready to stoop to any drudgery, however menial; (and by so doing, have really ennobled themselves far more than they have ever been ennobled by all the titles and lands that have come down to them from the time of Clovis and Charlemagne); and yet pray what were they to do, when they could not get even these menial employments? I'll tell you what they did; they proved themselves Christians in an inverse ratio; for Christianity is an *all*-sided, and not a *one*-sided remedy. They let others do unto them what they would have done unto others, had their positions been reversed; that is, they accepted with quite as much benevolence and grace, as they would have given; and, indeed, to receive well, requires even a larger, deeper, and purer benevolence than to give: the latter is often but the superfluous overflowing of the luxurious fountain which wealth has created for pleasure; but the former requires some effort to draw the limpid flood from its profound and unsullied source. Besides, my dear Sir, if none should be helped, who ought to help? and what becomes of the parable of the Good Samaritan?"

"I'll tell you what has become of the Good Samaritan," said the Duc de Bouillon, actually rousing

himself into a perpendicular attitude, "this is what he did only a month ago. There is a certain Comte de— (no matter what) here, and his family, who call themselves Monsieur and Madame La Tour. Well, Madame and her daughters are first-rate embroidresses, and wanted to open a *magazin de broderie*, but that would take several hundred pounds, and where were they to get them? Luckily, one day Monsieur la Tour fell in with the Good Samaritan, whose name in the present day is Sir George Paul—"

"Tut, tut, my dear Duke; let me finish my story about Goldsmith," interrupted my uncle.

"Excusez, mon Général; mais chacun à son tour," resumed the Duke. "Well, this anonymous Good Samaritan could not afford, or whether he could afford them or not, he did not like to run the risk of wounding Monsieur de la Tour's pride, by offering him the number of hundreds required for his commercial enterprise; so what does he do, but asks him to breakfast one morning, to talk over his projects; and, in the course of conversation, tells him with a lachrymose face that he is sorry it will not be in his power to lend him the sum he requires. Soon after, one of the Good Samaritan's accomplices was ordered to come into the room (quite accidentally, of course) with some lottery tickets.

"'Bless me, my dear La Tour,' cries the Good Samaritan, 'this seems to be quite providential. Suppose we try our luck for the nonce?"

"La Tour shook his head, and said he had no right to risk even a few pounds on such a chance.

"'Well, then,' said the Samaritan, 'I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll buy one ticket for myself, and one for your little Eugénie; but mind, if hers should by good fortune come up a good round prize, she must repay me the price of the ticket; for I have no idea of giving to the rich,' said the Good Samaritan, buttoning up his pockets, and giving himself all the airs of a miser, which however sate so awkwardly on him, that La Tour, who was not the least deceived by him (as he told me) could not help laughing; but while he laughed, the tears also came into his eyes; for his heart had told him what the Good Samaritan was about.

"'Now,' said the latter, after he had bought the tickets, taking down the numbers of both; 'fair play's a jewel, so you keep yours, and I'll keep mine.'

"In due time, the Samaritan received a letter from the London lottery-office, stating that No. 5,492 had come up a prize of £5,000. This happened to be his own ticket, La Tour's being a blank; but, instead of rejoicing, his first exclamation was (as his accomplice, a young fellow of the name of Waltham, since informed me):

"'Hang it, how provoking!' but reflecting a moment, he again exclaimed:

"'I have it! Waltham, just get one of the clerks to copy this letter *verbatim*, only saying that it is No. 20,302 that has come up the £5,000 prize, and

that 5,492 is a blank. Direct it to me, and then enclose it to your mother, and beg of her to post it instanter, that I may get it back without a moment's delay.'

"No sooner said than done. In due time, the false statement returned, bearing every *ex-officio* mark of the different posts it had passed through; and the Samaritan was as enchanted at his fraud as the more rigidly virtuous could be at their own nice sense of propriety, when they would not resort to such means, or indeed to any means at all, to save a fellow-creature from perishing. No sooner was he possessed of this precious document (having also got his own draft for the £5,000 cashed at a local bank, which he had received through his agent by the same post as the sham letter), than he sits down, and writes out the following:

"'Mademoiselle Eugénie La Tour, debtor to ——— £20. He is sorry to be so importunate, but as he has a large account to make up, will feel much obliged to her to remit him this amount by bearer.'

"The bearer being the before-mentioned accomplice, Waltham, who was posted off to poor La Tour's with a despatch-box full of bank-notes and gold, to the amount of £5,000.

"Now, can you guess who this Good Samaritan was?"

"Oh, Uncle Paulett, to be sure—who else could it

be?" cried Grace and I, throwing our arms round his neck; while Mary O'Donnell and Bloom Belzoni wiped their eyes, and kissed his hands.

"Nonsense," said my uncle, disengaging himself from us; "you musn't believe half that Duc de Bouillon tells you. It needs only to be his friend for him to endow you with all the talents yet discovered, and job you every cardinal virtue by the hour."

"Soit, mon cher; mais on ne prête qu'aux riches," said the Duke sinking back into his reclining position.

"Well, and about Goldsmith?" said Mary O'Donnell, who being fifteen, and a great lover of the "Vicar of Wakefield," to say nothing of her knowing "The Traveller" nearly by heart, was the most interested of the party.

"My child, I have little more to tell of him, for that was my first and last time of meeting him; and, poor fellow, he died the April following the Christmas I had met him at Bolton; however, on that Christmas night, he was the gayest of the gay, and when we parted, he gave me an invitation to go and see him in the Temple; but my mother taking me over to Ireland with her, on our return from the Bunburys, and remaining there till May, I was too late to avail myself of so great a privilege. On my return, I found the whole of his works, handsomely bound, in which he had written, according to his promise; and that is all that remains to me of poor Goldsmith."

"All!" echoed the Duke, "and how much more would you have had?"

"The man, if it might have been," said my uncle with a sigh; and he got up and stirred the fire in a manner that evinced more perseverance than skill.

"But surely Goldsmith couldn't have been ugly?" asked Mary O'Donnell.

"I fear, my dear Mary, according to the strict rules of beauty, that he was; but to my taste, no face so saturated with goodness could be ugly; however, his only positive beauty, which was his head, as I before told you, he concealed under that flagitious wig of his: his face was rather heavy, the nose thick and inclining to bottle, the upper lip long but somewhat redeemed by not being straight, but slightly curled and projecting over the under one: the brow was also rather projecting, the eyes hazel, and possessing that intense look of mingled kindness, honesty, and sagacity, which is to be seen in those of an old hound, such eyes in short as seem to let you just perceive a world of internal beauty, like those rude old Venetian caskets for keeping pearls unblemished; and which, when only opened the least in the world, betrayed the priceless gems concealed within their rugged exterior. I am sorry also, Miss O'Donnell and Miss Belzoni, to inform you that he was rather inclined to corpulency, and not over tall."

"And is Mary Horneck dead, too?" asked Bloom.

"No, she is married to General Gwyn; and, strange as it may seem, still beautiful."

my uncle.

"And what sort of beauty is she?" re-inter
Mary.

"I suppose you mean, *was* she in Goldsmith's

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"She was about the middle height, slight
being thin, which would imply angles—that
heresy in woman; but merely willowy and elast
that were not so much dark in themselves as fr
constant dilation of their pupils; she had, too,
those exquisitely soft and over-hanging compl
like night and morning parting in a summer s
melancholy of the one tempering the glowing bri
of the other; but above all, and better than
possessed that undefinable grace, whether in ac
in repose, which is to beauty what expressior
music—the secret of its power, the spell of its wi
All her details were good, hands, feet, teeth, and
from whence issued a most sweet and silvery
without which a woman is scarcely a woman."

ance; but having taken two pieces, not to destroy the symmetrical order of the heap, I heard my uncle say, as he rose and placed his cup upon the table:

"Oh! is she? I'll go to her;" and so saying, he left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

If I had one talent more strongly developed than another at that time it certainly was for the demolition of plum-cake; and could I have concentrated and confined my thoughts, tastes, and feelings to that innocuous and truly feminine occupation, I might have grown up with that quantum of inanity, so peculiar to "*British females*," and which gives them that blind faith in the superiority of the male sex, which has made man-worship, founded on Mammon-worship, the national code of England. Hence that charming little flattery of the faults, and truckling to the vices of men, which English young ladies, and English young ladies only, are capable of; for in no other country will you hear young ladies expressing their fondness for the odour of cigars, and their love for racing, yachting, or boating, as the case may be, in order to assure one of

the opposite sex of their entire congeniality with his tastes; in no other country will you see a set of women observing a profound and sulky silence towards each other when congregated after dinner, till the gentlemen appear, when lo! like electric telegraphs, they are instantly animated into the most wonderful and rapid communicativeness, reversing the order of nature, and assiduously evincing that *prévenance* and deferential attention to the lords of the creation, which in every other quarter of the globe they receive, instead of give.

This courting and adulation of men that go on in English society (for it is nothing less), are positively disgusting. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even do ye also unto them," seems to be the one text upon which the "*British female*" squares the rule of her conduct; so that in all this love-making on their part, they merely act upon the Christian principle of doing as they would be done by. It is only a pity that they confine so beautiful a code entirely to their intercourse with the other sex, for the light that so shines before men is put under a bushel, wherever women are concerned; for your true and genuine "*British female*" has seldom a human feeling for her sister woman, unless it be one of hatred, malice, or revenge; and how should it be otherwise, in a country where women have but one aim and end in life, namely, to covertly fool the superior sex before and after marriage; for cunning and deceit form the

two-edged sword with which nature arms slaves, and how can the finer and purer tissues of character be expected from a race of women who are nationally denominated "*females!*" and who not only submit to, but echo, and certainly merit, the appellation?*

Fine and noble specimens of human nature might be expected, and are often, very often, found among *le beau sexe;* but what could be anticipated from a set of "*females!*" but that which their name implies. We are so justly ridiculed all over the continent for this zoological definition of our women, that I once heard an Austrian, on being asked if it had been a full ball at Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans on the previous night, reply:

"Mais oui, surtout il y avait beaucoup d'Anglais et leurs femelles!"

I don't know why I should make these reflections here, unless it is from an association of ideas in the electric chain of circumstances, for even then the first step of my educational ladder was on life's threshold in the shape of the worthy woman whose great golden rule for young ladies was,

"Mesdemoiselles, il faut toujours mettre, et tenir les hommes à leur place; car le meilleur n'en vaut guère." And it is certainly better to learn this great truth in time, than to find it out too late.

My uncle had no sooner left the room than I began

* See "Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française." Article FEMELLE.

making the tour of it; and having, thanks to the exceeding rigidity of my Salisbury flannel barricade, nearly swept a most beautiful and costly *capo de monte* cup and saucer off a *chiffonière*, which luckily Mr. Waltham caught and saved from falling, I thought it better to bend my steps to the safer side of the room where there was no china to be demolished; so that I finally found myself standing by the cabinet, out of which my uncle had taken "Goody Two Shoes;" and as the little drawer was half open, I espied a large medallion of purple enamel, with initials in small brilliants on the back of it.

It is not only children that require to be taught that important branch of minor morals, the not prying into or fiddling with other persons' things, for among the many shades or genuses of vulgarity and ill-breeding, so rife among our compatriots, is that one affecting all ages and classes, of never entering a room but everything is poked or pulled about till it is either broken or spoilt; some persons while they are talking to you, if within reach of a table of knic-knacs, indefatigably keep drumming the devil's tattoo upon highly polished bühl, or tortoise-shell boxes, which has the double effect of both dimming and scratching them; or if it happens to be a watch, or a *cassolette*, or any other chained trinket, then will it be swung backwards and forwards till it is broken. I once had a beautiful old *sèvre* china coffer, mounted in gold, fairly broken off its hinges, by being incessantly opened and shut during

half an hour's rapid talk by one of these O. T.'s only a fiddler; or rather, O. B.'s only a bore.

On other occasions, I have come into the room, and found young ladies reading my notes; not being able to deny the fact, they have apologized by saying they were only notes of invitation, whereupon I have invariably suggested, that as they were not invitations to them, it was really a pity they should give themselves the trouble of reading them. How often too, are servants blamed for dilapidated China, and *bijouterie*, that visitors have fiddled with till they have broken, and then, but not till then, left? All this is mean, vulgar, and detestable, and the sooner people leave off such practices the better. Being at this time myself only a fiddler, I opened the drawer, and took out the medallion which, on the other side, was circled with a rich plait of sunny brown hair, thereby I knew it was a portrait: and at the cost of two nails, I opened it.

"Oh! what a beautiful lady!" exclaimed I, upon seeing the miniature of a girl about eighteen in a white dress, a broad blue Persian sash; the hair powdered, and a piece of black velvet round the throat; the eyes were dark blue; the complexion delicately fair, and the features small and exceedingly fine, with that sort of poetical melancholy in the face, which casts over the countenance the tenderness of twilight.

"Ah!" said the Duc de Bouillon with a sigh, actually making an effort to get from the sofa on which he was sitting, and come over to the cabinet at which I was

standing, in order to rescue the picture from my sacrilegious fiddlings. For having devoted a long life to a course of falling in love, the poor Duke was a great respecter of the sacred rites and high mysteries of the divine passion in others. "Ah! my dear child, put that down; put it back into the drawer, for fear your uncle should return; you must never touch that picture." And he took it out of my hand, and replaced it.

"But whose picture is it?" asked I.

"It is the picture of poor Mary Capel, now Mrs. Vavasour. She was your Uncle Paulett's first, and indeed I believe his only love; but her mother forced her to marry the greatest wretch that ever existed, a Mr. Vavasour, the father of that boy that Sir Joseph Paulett said was coming here with his wife."

"A first love; what is a first love?" said I.

"A dream, Mirry," replied the poor Duke with a dyspeptic sigh, and a ludicrous look of fat sentiment at a picture of his own first love, the Duchesse de Mazarin, contained in the lid of a snuff-box, which he always carried about him when my Aunt Marley dined out.

"A dream!" I repeated; "I wonder then, if I have ever dreamt a first love?"

"Scarcely yet, my little darling, I should think," said the Duke kissing me, as both he and Mr. Waltham laughed immoderately.

"Ah, Monseigneur," said the Secretary with a sly

glance at the snuff-box, "on revient toujours à ses premières amours? n'est-ce pas?"

"Ma foi, mon cher Monsieur, c'est un peu obligatoire; vu, que nos premières amours ne nous reviennent jamais!" laughed the Duke, taking a pinch of snuff, and consigning the Duchesse de Mazarin to his pocket.

He had scarcely done so, before the folding-doors opened wide to admit my uncle, who, however, brought back more than he had taken away; for a lady was leaning on his arm. But I must describe her, for there are no such ladies to be seen now, I promise you, nor were there even in the War, unless you went to Paris for them, which was not easily done then; her appearance struck us as the more extraordinary, not to say ridiculous, from the fact of English absurdity of dress, being at that time the very antipodes of French absurdity. The English "*females*" (dear fatal name rest *never* "unrevealed!") then really did dress with poke bonnets, like bathing machines, with green veil, union-jacks floating above them, very long waists, very short and very narrow petticoats, tea-coloured jean-boots, with rather thick soles; the said boots being laced up the centre; a broad hem, unhidden by flounce, or furbellow, was all the ornament ever tacked to their skirts, a long tight plain spencer completed in those days the Anglo-Saxon female costume, exactly like that of the young ladies who go (I believe with the Prince of Wales) down to a public-house at Wapping to besiege that remorseless *crève-cœur* of an actor, as

described in that extraordinary histrionic and historical nightmare of M. Fréderic le Maistre's, entitled, "Kean, Drame en cinq actes," except that the spencers aforesaid were not made of green baize, as represented on the boards of the Porte St. Martin.

It will be perceived by this that the English style of dress in 1812 was the flat and horizontal, whereas the French style, on the contrary, was the perpendicular and the *bombé*, of which the lady now leaning on my uncle's arm was a florid and first-rate specimen; for though an *émigrée* she had friends who kept her *au courant* to the Parisian fashions. She, therefore, on the present occasion burst upon our dazzled vision in all the facets of the following splendour: instead of a bathing-machine, she wore on her head a chimney-pot of white Leghorn; for, without any exaggeration, the crown of her bonnet was half a yard high, and quite perpendicular, only slightly bowed out at the back, and curving forwards in front. This chimney-pot also did duty as a flower-pot, as at the very summit of it appeared a profusion of such exquisite roses, carnations, mignionette, and pansies, as at that time were never seen in the British isles, except growing in real *parterres*; the leaf, that is, the front of this stupendous superstructure was shallow, being about the depth and shape of half a milk-pan. On each side underneath appeared little tufts of very short black ringlets, all kept in their place by a band of narrow black velvet round the head; the forehead under this black velvet was

high and straight, evidencing much capacity, but *bombé* in the centre, with three wrinkles or lines as straight as if they had been ruled; the eyebrows were well marked, the eyes small, long, coffee-coloured, and *spirituel*. The nose was somewhat long, somewhat thin, and, if the truth must be told, somewhat red; but as those most concerned, namely, its own eyes, overlooked all these little defects, they are no business of ours. The complexion of this lady (though she herself was a staunch royalist) set forth the republican hues, not handsome when united in the human face, of the national colours of Geneva, red and yellow.

The mouth, like that of most Frenchwomen, was a decided failure, and need not have opened so wide to display such very irregular teeth; but with all this, there was such a decided expression of good-nature and intellectual vivacity about the face, that it would have redeemed far plainer features. In stature about the middle height. She was thin and angular; but, instead of going the lengths the English ladies did, her waist if waist that could be called, which waist was none, went literally under her arms, the back at each side, gracefully branching off like the sticks of a fan. She wore a black velvet spencer, with a fall of black blonde round the waist, and slashed, or what were then called top-sleeves.

Her dress was composed of white cambric muslin, but flounced up to the knees, each flounce being deeply embroidered in a wheel-pattern (her own work), and an insertion of the same embroidery heading each *volant*. In

her right hand she carried a black velvet reticule with a steel clasp and chain, and across the same arm hung a yellow, or rather a deep aventurine-coloured Cashmere shawl, with a palm-border to it; but altogether the most miraculous part of her appearance to our uninitiated War-like eyes, was the exquisite make and fit of her gloves and shoes.

"Grace—Mirry," said my uncle, leading her up to us. "Here is Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, the lady who is kindly going to take charge of you; and in return for her care I hope, nay indeed, I'm sure, you will do everything to please her, and give her as little trouble as possible."

We both felt inclined at the commencement of this exordium to blush and hang our heads, and indeed by the species of vertigo that was stealing over mine, it was evident that the tide of my *idées Napoléoniennes* was fast flowing in upon me, but it was impossible to resist the affectionate and polished *acceuil* of Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who, like all classes of her compatriots, possessed in the highest degree Swift's most just definition of good-breeding—"The art of putting people at their ease;" so that in less than five minutes, like the Lilliputians with Gulliver, we took courage to examine her from head to foot, and even to manipulate her bag in a manner which she took an early opportunity of informing us was "très-inconvenable pour des demoiselles."

The Duc de Bouillon, much to his inconvenience,

had remained standing all this time, as if he had forgotten that Mademoiselle de Guilleragues *was only a governess!* though I rather think that it was because he did not forget it, that he made a point of standing, as he never forgot he was a gentleman, though a prince of the blood.

"Permettez, Monseigneur, que je vous présente Mademoiselle de Guilleragues?" said my uncle.

"Mon bon ami, Sir George, me ménage toujours des surprises agréables: charmé d'avoir l'honneur de faire votre connaissance, Mademoiselle," bowed the Duke.

"Comment!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, clasping her hands, while the tears came into her eyes.

"J'aurai l'honneur de parler à Monseigneur le Duc de Bouillon, l'illustre cousin de sa Majesté? Ah! quel bonheur!"

And the good lady was obliged to rescue her bag from my clutches, in order to obtain the assistance of her handkerchief, as the tears were coursing each other down her cheeks.

"Ma chère demoiselle," said the Duke, holding out both hands to her, "if by accident you happen to be related to my old friend, the Maréchal de Guilleragues, you and I ought to be very good friends, for he and I were such."

"I am his niece, Monseigneur, and am only too much honoured by your allowing me to establish my right of succession to my uncle's high privileges. But

as now," said she, with a smile, "I am only a poor governess," and here she turned to my uncle, "I always say, upon entering a new situation, what my ancestor Monsieur de Guilleragues said to Louis Quatorze; as I generally hear the same complaints of my predecessors as those his Majesty made to my relative of his."

"And what were they?" asked my uncle.

"Why," replied Mademoiselle, "when Louis Quatorze appointed my ancestor ambassador to the Porte, he told him that if he meant to acquit himself properly of his embassy, he must be the very reverse of his predecessors. To which Monsieur de Guilleragues replied: 'Sire, I will endeavour to act in such a manner, that your Majesty shall not be obliged to give similar instructions to my successor.'"

"Ha! ha! ha! very good. On voit bien Mademoiselle, que vous chassez bien de race."

Mademoiselle gracefully acknowledged the compliment, and my uncle rang, and ordered supper to be got ready for her.

"A propos de La Porte," said the Duke, "mon Général, you should show Mademoiselle your magnificent sable-lined pelisses, and diamond snuff-boxes, especially the blood-stone one, with a view of the seraglio in brilliants at the back of it."

"As to the pelisses," said my uncle, "I am ashamed to say that they have been left hanging up in the servants' hall, till the moth has got into one of the

sleeves; and I took it to London last year to be repaired; but they said the sable was so magnificent, and the sleeve being almost two yards wide, it would have cost about £150 to match the fur; so I would not have it done."

"It would have been better to have disposed of both the pelisses, for at that rate you would have got about £1,500 for the two, or more," said the Duke.

"It would so," replied my uncle, "if I had thought of it."

"Ah, there it is; you never think of anything but giving," said the Duke; "so now give Mademoiselle the pleasure of looking at the boxes."

"Ah, Monsieur a été à la Porte aussi?" said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, as my uncle walked over to a cabinet to get the boxes.

"Oui, Mademoiselle, j'étais si mauvais diplomate, qu'on m'a mis à la Porte!" laughed my uncle.

The boxes were now produced, and the amulets they contained perfumed the whole room with their subtile and delicious odours. On the lid of one with the view of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in brilliants, was a curious and magnificent piece of barbaric workmanship.

"Ciel! comme c'est beau!" exclaimed Mademoiselle; and then, not able to resist a *bon mot*, she added: "Tiens! je ne savais pas que l'on brillait tant au sérail!"

Supper was soon after announced, and we were

allowed to remain up, in order that we might escort Mademoiselle de Guilleragues to her future dominions. She had completely disarmed us, or rather me, for Grace had no prejudices to conquer. But Nelly, poor Nelly! dethroned monarchs, disgraced ministers, and impeached commanders-in-chief, by a process of comparative analogy, *might* perhaps have some faint glimmering of the moral civil war that devastated her constitution upon that eventful night, but humbler mortals, I'm very sure, could not; therefore, it would be vain to attempt to describe it. One outward evidence, and one only, of these internal commotions remains vividly impressed upon my memory, and if adequately transferred to canvas, it would have made a worthy *pendant* for an historical picture of Cromwell ordering "that bauble," the mace, to be removed from the table of the House of Commons, it was when Nelly, pointing to the shelf that contained my library! namely, a New Testament, Common Prayer-Book, Hymn-Book, spelling-book, and highly dogs'-eared editions of "Puss in Boots" and "Mother Hubbard," without uttering another syllable, before, or after, said:

"Take thim booksh, Missh Mirry, to your new Frinch tacher, Missh Killrag; itsh no longer any businesh of *mine!*"

CHAPTER XII.

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had now been with us about eight months, and much had she had to contend with; for being inducted into a new school-room must, I should think, be exceedingly like taking possession of a new kingdom; whether in the natural course of succession, or by main force (commonly called usurpation), or by the all-powerful, but short-lived omnipotence of popular caprice; still there are always so many contrary interests to conciliate, so much open enmity to vanquish, so much covert rancour to guess at and avoid, and so much neutral apathy to be propitiated into good-will, that in either case it becomes the most difficult thing in the world to satisfy the *exigeance* of that polyhedral Mrs. Grundy, Public Opinion.

All this is merely a round-about or Irish way of

condensing my private opinion, that both governesses and monarchs have "a very hard place of it;" and indeed, were it not that the latter are so much better paid than the former, I'd as soon be the one as the other.

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues found much to do, and still more to undo. Between Nelly's tone and my aunts' tempers, our deportment was not exactly up to the refined standard of a person who had a tender and admiring recollection of the graceful bearing of Marie-Antoinette; but, as she with truth confessed, that the best and most important part of our tuition was the portion we had received from Nelly, the latter soon grew not only reconciled to her, but complimentary in her turn; for although, among other innovations, she had the additional trouble of curling my hair as well as Grace's, yet only one little month after the inauguration of the new dynasty, while screwing up one of the aforesaid curls so tightly, that I was obliged to clamour for repeal, as loudly as ever she herself had done, before I could shut my eyes, she volunteered to observe (and it was the more handsome on her part, as there was nothing to call forth the remark at the time):

"Indade, I don't doubt but dat Mamzelle Killrag ish a good sort of ooman enough, considering she's only a Frinch ooman."

Even the higher powers at the onset had voluntarily abdicated in her favour: for my aunts, like all weak

and violent persons, were full of *engouements*. They were great people for idols and angels at first, but unfortunately, all their angels, like Lucifer, ended by being devils. Well would it have been for us, if the absolute power delegated to Mademoiselle de Guilleragues on her arrival, had been continued to her intact, for as Lamartine says: "The epoch when aristocracies fall, nations regenerate, the sap of the people is there," and upon my aunts' rule having fallen into disuse, we really were beginning to regenerate, poor little people that we were. But, alas! terrible was the re-action; a month saw us again under a despotic government, our studies were constantly interrupted by a knock at the door, and the *poursuivant* Mole opening it with "If you please, Mumzelle, Mrs. Marley says as the young ladies is to be got ready to go out in the carriage with her directly."

The chief cause of these interruptions were Lady Laura O'Shindy's Saturday Morning parties, or as my Uncle Charles not inaptly called them (from the extraordinary collection of curious, and thank Heaven, rare bipeds, there congregated), her *matinées maroufles*.* Why we were dragged there, goodness only knows; unless it was that benevolence, philanthropy, liberty, progression, and the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers, being always *talked* at them. It was as a sort of sample or pattern off of the entire piece of her

* Marouflé, in French, means a dirty boorish fellow, also a cheat.

benevolence, that my Aunt Marley exhibited us at these art unions of mock-sentiment, mock-virtue, and mock-philosophy, though the ostensible reason assigned by her was, "to enlighten our minds."

All I know is, to our infinite horror and dismay, *there* we were taken without Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, for that would look like a restraint upon us; "and why should any human being be restrained?" as my Aunt Marley used to ask, amid rounds of applause at the O'Shindy gatherings, a question, however, which remained unanswered, though applauded; for, for us, in our untutored ignorance, was reserved the triumph of bringing her round to a contrary opinion, as at home she seemed to think that there were at least two human beings who should be *always* restrained, nay more, coerced. Meanwhile, week after week were our necessary studies interrupted for the unnecessary martyrdom of attending Lady Laura's botheropedias, as Nelly called them; while we exclaimed with Mrs. Haller: "Is Saturday come again so soon?"

We were too young to draw up a debtor and creditor account of *pros* and *cons*, and to set Sir Joseph Paulett's departure for Spain against the O'Shindy *matinées maroufles*. Nor indeed, even had we possessed the calculating talents of Mr. Joseph Hume, or the calculating machine of Mr. Babbage, could we have found much on our balance side of the sheet; for though Don José was gone, he had left us

the small change of himself, in his wife, six sons, and a daughter; so that my poor Uncle Paulett bid fair to be nephewed and nieced out of house and home; for with regard to my aunts and Lady Paulett, it so fell out—that is, *they* so fell out—that from the first it was easy to perceive that the united feuds of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, Montagues and Capulets, had been distilled into a sort of concentrated quintessence for their sole use; Lady Paulett was too much a woman of the world to meet my aunts half-way in their generous attempts at open warfare, setting aside the vulgarity of what are called quarrels.

The party most injured and most in the right is sure to get the worst of it in public opinion, from the fact of their sense of injury not allowing them to dulcify their detestation, and rein in their resentment down to the modulated tone, and *manège* amble exacted by the delicate nerves of society; whereas, the quiet back-stabbings in the dark of the aggressor despatch the victim much more effectually, without any public breach of the peace, or the slightest compromise of the assassin. Had Lady Paulett been hump-backed (which she was not), my aunts, disliking her as they did, would have said before a room full of people, "Don't you think, Lady Paulett, you had better put on a shawl? some figures look best covered;" and by so doing, would have got themselves, not undeservedly, branded with ill-nature; whereas, had the hump been on either of my aunts' shoulders, and

therefore concealed as far as might be with a scarf or shawl, Lady Paulett, with precisely the same motive, would have snatched off the friendly drapery with a sweet smile, and said, in a soft voice:

"Dear Mrs. Marley," (or Miss Paulett), "you seem overpowered with the heat; allow me to help you off with your shawl?" Whereupon that ever righteous, and unerring judge, the world, would have decided that Lady Paulett was a sweet woman, and resented, as much as its sublime apathy ever does resent other people's injuries, the bare idea of her having a malicious motive for so kind an act. (Moral, in evil or good, it matters little *what* people do, but *the way* in which they do it.) "Two of a trade," says the proverb, "can never agree;" and both my aunts and Lady Paulett being exceedingly jealous of their influence over their uncle, or, in other words, tenacious of their rule in the house, it was not likely that they should bestow a single grain more of affection upon each other than they did. The hostile powers thus drawn out in battle array, their respective resources may be esteemed as follows: My aunts had youth and beauty, and what in the War was considered great taste in dress; the fact being that, from their beauty, the most extraordinary freaks of colour and material, played pranks with impunity on them, which would have got them transported for life had they done so upon less favoured mortals.

Lady Paulett had a knowledge of the world, and

fashion: for it is a remarkable fact, that could she and Fiametta have been insured an eternal existence, neither Debrett, nor his successor, Mr. Burke, need ever have given to the public the valuable results of their labours, so complete a peerage and baronetage did they form; for even as a child, I don't think Fiametta's mouth ever opened to anything less than a Lady Mary, or a Lord George. My aunts said it was very vulgar to be always talking peerage, as the Pauletts did; but what else could they do, poor people, if they talked at all? for as the whole and sole study of their lives was to know great people, and as persons seldom devote *all* their energies to the achievement of one object without succeeding in it, they *did* know great people, nay, all the great people in London; therefore I maintain that it showed great sense in them to only talk of what they knew, and I sincerely wish that every one would adopt the same plan, and then there would be much less ill-nature retailed in the world, and still less believed; whereas that said dear world now treats every *on dit* that can possibly injure their neighbours, as Puff in the "Critic" treats farcical incidents, and considers all calumnies as "things just so probable, that though they never *did* happen, they *might* do so."

But my aunts should have been more tolerant to this little foible of Lady Paulett's, from recollecting the more favourable circumstances in which they had had the good fortune to be placed; for having lived the most part of their lives in, or near Clanfuddle, where pota-

toes and peat were more plentiful than peers or potentates, they were not of course likely to fall into a *cacoëthes libro roso.*

My aunts, when pleased, were good-natured; Lady Paulett, whether she was pleased or not, was always good-tempered, and generally good-humoured. But greater perhaps than all other sources of rivalry were the respective talents and personal appearance of Fiametta and ourselves. She was one of the prettiest children that ever was seen, with all the advantages of dress, and still more of that *savoir vivre,* which even the children of worldly persons, living in, and for, the world, so soon acquire; for though only ten, she had as much manner (without being *maniérée,* for she was too off-hand for that) as if she had been twenty.

This was pronounced disgusting by my aunts, especially as this infant Circe used to go even still greater lengths, and dance to assembled drawing-rooms of an evening cachouchas and boleros *en costume,* which, as my aunts truly said, would have been better adapted to the boards of the Opera; a remark which my Uncle Paulett always silenced with a frown, as he saw nothing beyond the beauty of the child, and the exquisite grace of her movements, with which he was perfectly enchanted; the more so perhaps that, echoing all the slang of her brothers, she also set up for a wit. The fact is, the whole thing was *beyond* my aunts; their ideas of children being little chubby, red and white receptacles for bread and milk and roast mutton, like

Grace and me, swathed in the smallest possible quantity of unadorned cambric muslin, or exiled nankin, with no more manners than a young calf, or no greater stock of accomplishments than those possessed by youthful ourang-outangs.

Then, too, there was another anomaly, a sort of excrescence upon these Paulett exotics, in the shape of Master Philip Vavasour, a young gentleman of seventeen, who though *blasé boys* were not then invented, yet upon the strength (as it was supposed) of a particularly well-turned head of soft, brown, crisp, curled hair, rising above a remarkably white round throat, a very fine pair of dark, long cut, softly brilliant eyes, a most delicately chiselled nose, short upper lip, brilliant teeth, harmoniously moulded chin, high white forehead, and Antinous profile, used to affect the Byronic in dress and bearing. The former he achieved by wooing sore throats in going without a neckerchief, and the latter by fancying himself desperately in love with Fiametta Paulett; and, as he was the heir of his uncle, Mr. Dingly Vavasour, the *millionnaire*, Lady Paulett had already given Fiametta instructions (not indeed that she needed them, such was the precocity of her genius) never to thwart *dear* Philip; for though it was true that he was only a commoner, still such a splendid property as Marmiondale was not to be let slip through one's fingers, unless indeed a ducal coronet jerked it through.

It may then easily be supposed, with such "unprece-

dented attraction," as the play bills have it, what a sorry figure *we!* and our Salisbury flannel housings cut; in vain poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues styled Fiametta an *effrontée petite comédienne*, and even on one occasion went so far, in speaking of Don José, as to call him *son saltimbanque de père;* in vain she continued to prognosticate certain future ignitions of the Thames from Grace's great application and capacity, and the rapid progress she made, whether in useful knowledge or attractive accomplishments; in vain she proclaimed that I should one day be a genius, the only earthly guarantee this good, kind creature had for going security for me to so vast an amount, being that I was *then* a dunce: still we had no chance against such fearful odds, and we felt we had not. Yet did this disheartening on our part arise from neither envy nor jealousy. We wondered at, and admired Fia, as we called her, with too large and luminous an admiration for such a sharp goading passion as jealousy, or so dark and mean a one as envy, to take possession of us. No, it was nothing more than the same despairing feeling which seized upon the poor sculptor of Chios, and drove him home to break his moulds after he had seen the Zephyrus of Praxiteles.

What was the use of spelling, grammar, history, French, Italian, arithmetic, or geography? Let Grace master them as she would, or let them master me, as they might, we felt that in either case they could never

make us dance boleros like Fiametta. But this was an unattainable dream, a vision too bright, and too far beyond us to weigh long upon our youthful, and for that reason, philosophical temperaments; therefore the real arrow that rankled, was the undisguised contempt of Philip Vavasour, for all we said and did. Had he been an ordinary boy, like Clarence, Gloucester, Cumberland, Howard, Russell, and Stanley Paulett, Fiametta's brothers—riding forbidden horses; mortgaging a fortnight's allowance for one day's tarts; hugging Mrs. Stillingfleet with one arm, while he stretched out the other to steal her brandied cherries; or winking at his confederates while he was *doing* the elders; or even had he attempted a poll-tax by announcing that "his name was Norval!" and extorted half-crowns on the strength of it from old gentlemen's drab-pockets, like the Master Abrahams; or made classical attempts to excavate ancient Rome, with the *As in Presenti* like the Master O'Donnells—we should have known how to have repaid his contempt in kind. But how was it possible to despise a young gentleman who never played at marbles, had always clean hands and perfumes on his handkerchiefs, and not only dined with the grown-up people, but called with as much authority as any of them for whatever he might chance to want during the repast.

In short about this time we began to be thoroughly miserable, for though of course my aunts would not openly acknowledge our inferiority to Fiametta, they

secretly felt it, and with their usual justice, vented the imperfections of their own training upon us. They had, moreover, other sources of discontent at this epoch: Lady Paulett, in order to divide and govern, had entirely appropriated one of the aides-de-camp to her own service; and I suppose I need not say that one was Lord Frederick, while between my Aunt Bell and Captain Dapperwit, there existed a little difference of opinion; *she* thought he ought to have proposed for her in form, but *he*, it seems thought otherwise, for though several times on the brink of doing so, when it came to the point, he was seized with a panic, which had it been in war, instead of love, would have been fatal to his reputation; but as everything in those days was judged by a military standard, the prudent Captain no doubt thought that in a wife as well as in a sword, *temper* was the first desideratum. I think I mentioned that my grandmother had tempted Providence by committing marriage three times, and three times a merciful Providence had commuted her sentence to widowhood; but this fatal matrimonial mania having become chronic, she took unto herself a fourth lord and master, under the seductive form of Mr. Phelim Fitzackerley, shortly after my poor mother's marriage. This gentleman had now also departed for the other world to join his predecessors, and the inconvenience which his doing so occasioned my aunts, arose simply from his disconsolate widow, who was now too far advanced on the same journey herself to hope to replace him by a

fifth husband, wishing one or both of her daughters to return, at least for a short time, to Clanfuddle, to solace her bereavement; but in weighing the matter, they had decided that two daughters, let them be *divided* as they would, could never replace four husbands! so they resolved upon remaining where they were, especially as the old Margravine of Anspach, (*ci-devant* Lady Craven) had written to my Uncle Paulett to threaten him with a visit, and was now hourly expected; neither was there any use in going into mourning for a fourth step-father: as my aunts justly observed, since their mother had married the man, why didn't he live on as he ought to have done, and take care of her?

My Aunt Bell felt that being able to quarter *four* husbands in her maternal escutcheon, was not by any means the best bait for securing *one* on her own account; and as my Aunt Marley read Buffon, and therefore knew that *les races se féminisent*, she feared that if she wore mourning for a quadrupled step-father, it would be proclaiming her poor mother's intense imbecility, and thereby causing her own *"unerring wisdom"* to be questioned. All things thus weighed, my aunts mourned the defunct Mr. Phelim Fitzackerly, *à la Chinoise*, in sky-blue, adopting however, on this trying occasion, what the French call *une humeur noire*, of which *we* had the full benefit.

In all these warring interests there was only my dear Uncle Paulett who remained unchanged, or not quite that either, for he was, if possible, kinder than ever;

and as he was a very early riser, after family prayers, which he always read in the library, he used to have us into his study of a morning long before Fiametta and the rest of the magnates were up; and on these occasions the programme generally consisted of chocolate and rusks, and Fido, a darling little Blenheim, who danced all round the room in measured time on his hind paws, while my uncle drew from a flute such unpretending airs as "Malbrook s'en va t'en guerre," "Ah! vous dirai-je Maman," or "Au clair de la lune, mon ami Pierrot," and Pomba looked on grave as a judge, and apparently despising Fido in her heart as Miriam did King David when he executed similar gambols before the Ark; but the cream of the jest always consisted in my uncle's saying, when the exhibition was over and the canine *coryphée* had recived biscuits in lieu of bouquets, presented by him to her with a low bow:

"Thank you, Miss Fiametta Paulett, dancing is certainly a most charming accomplishment; but you see I hold it dog cheap."

Now this was another phase of this dear, good man's amiable, but often fatal weakness of character; he assumed that we must feel a little (were it ever so little) jealous of the plaudits heaped upon Fiametta's boleros, and therefore made us this little deprecating ovation at her expense, instead of (had it been the case) wisely and honestly blaming us for so bad a feeling. But no wonder his only fault was rapidly increasing, for domestic fear is a moral hot-bed for forcing into

luxuriance every defect of character. And since the arrival of Lady Paulett the house was so torn with intestine commotions, that often on the day of a large dinner my aunts would be slamming their respective bed-room doors upon each other, so that had not Lady Paulett been there, there would have been no lady to receive the guests, though her doing so, was sure to entail a diatribe from my aunts against her impertinence in usurping their place; and often when she was charitably bestowing upon their health the indisposition, which only existed in their tempers, as the sole excuse she could make for their rudeness in not receiving the people whom they had convened, to her unutterable dismay they would suddenly appear in the midst of their condoling friends, and with a pyrotechnic look at Lady Paulett, assure the former, that they never had been so well in all their lives.

"And it was very odd that Lady Paulett should try to kill them, as, being neither bishops nor cabinet ministers, no one would benefit by their demise, ha, ha, ha!" And on these, alas! by no means unfrequent occasions, my poor uncle, with a faint heart, would try to echo their ha, ha, as if the whole affair had been a rare jest, though, Heaven knows, it was no joke to him; and then would the entire household devoutly wish that so good, amiable, and noble-minded a man had been wived, instead of nieced, though, upon reflection, I am convinced that he, individually, would have benefitted little by the change; for as Sir Thomas

Moore's historians relate of him, that "when he fell a marrying," although in love, with the youngest Miss Colt, who was the pretty and the good-tempered one, yet suddenly recollecting that the eldest was so very ugly, and so very ill-tempered, "he bethought him that if he did not take compassion on her and marry her, no one else would," so he victimized himself forthwith; and as my poor uncle would have been quite capable of a similar piece of self-immolation, the odds are, we should only have had a shrew aunt the more, and an ugly shrew into the bargain; and unless in extreme cases marriage is a dangerous experiment, for it has been truly said, that "it either gets rid of one's devils by the presence of an angel, or else it supplies their place with one whose name is legion."

With the exception of these little revels in the study of a morning, we were driven to our own resources for amusement, as Belzoni would not, for some unrevealed reason, allow Bloom to come and stay with us while Fiametta and Philip Vavasour were there; and the O'Donnells and Abrahams being, like ourselves, evidently overawed by so much grandeur, came rarely, to what they had done in the beginning.

Now I'm sorry to have to confess it, and I hope the virtuous reader won't fling down the book in disgust, but I was born a mimic; and for my further misfortune was endowed—as most mimics are—with a terribly keen sense of the ridiculous, and once knowing a person's peculiarities, I could not only imitate their face, voice and gestures, but

could extemporize whole scenes of adventures for them, and furnish dialogues of what they *would* have said, had they been placed in such circumstances. But I beg that no one will run away with the common, but very erroneous idea, that ill-nature is the ground-work of all mimicry, for it is not, and it was often those whom I loved the most that I imitated the best, provided they had any salient points to imitate; but parrots and ventriloquists might just as well be accused of being ill-natured and venomous, as mimics, for mimicry merely arises from a peculiar organization, moral and physical. Indeed, no one can sing or speak oratorically well, or be a good linguist, without possessing an imitative power, which is the germ of mimicry.

There could not well be a more good-natured man, or one, perhaps, who possessed and deserved more friends than the late Mr. Mathews the comedian, yet every one is aware that there could not possibly have been a more inimitable mimic; neither were James Smith nor Theodore Hook ill-natured men, and they had also the power of giving zest to their stories by their mimicry; but mind, I am by no means arguing that mimicry is a praiseworthy and desirable quality in any man, much less in any woman. I merely assert, and could prove, that it is not synonymous with bad heartedness and ill-nature as it is vulgarly supposed to be. Unfortunately for me, Grace, who was generally speaking, the rudder and ballast of my little crazy barque, so enjoyed, not to say revelled, in my imper-

sonations, that, instead of checking me, she encouraged and urged me on, by always asking me if I had got any new person, just as if I had been a sculptor, or a painter, and she was inquiring if I had any new work on the easel, or *statuette* in the clay.

The consequence was, that as we had a *carte blanche* from my uncle to invent work for the poor *émigrés*, a certain Madame Morel soon furnished me with the costumes for my characters as I wanted them, which were, of course, *fac-similes* of those worn by the originals, from whom I copied; but these "properties" were kept a profound secret by Grace and me.

Strange to say, my Uncle Paulett, though I knew him by heart, I never could take off; but as I told him, when I grew older, as he often urged me to try, that he was a person to be *copied*, and not *mimicked*. My present *répertoire* consisted of Nelly, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, the Duc de Bouillon, the two aides-de-camp, a stuttering brigade-major, Lady Laura O'Shindy, and our poor, dear, old Italian master, the Abbate Assai, whom we doated on, from the plaguing he endured from us, and the sweetmeats he bestowed upon us, and whom, in our school-room wit, we used to nickname Troppo. Of all these, I had the *fac-similed* costumes, the men's frock-coats obviating the necessity of those more masculine garments, which few women succeed in wearing, and which never become them if they do.

Well, "as it fell upon a day," when I thought that

I had, as usual, bolted the school-room door, and was giving one of my 'at homes' to Grace, the bundle of pink calico containing the "property" dresses, including the aides-de-camp cocked hats, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' chimney-top bonnet, Nelly's illustrious brown beaver, and the Duc de Bouillon's well-wadded blue velvet coat and satin waistcoat in one, with the blue ribbon and star of the *Saint Esprit*, splendidly wrought in spangles, and a bay window of eider-down, projecting from the front, was lying spread open on a table; while I, in a long, tight priest's cassock, a full-bottomed wig, three-cornered hat, large iron-rimmed spectacles, a huge pinchbeck snuff-box, filled with snuff, which I was plentifully pretending to take, but really sprinkling upon the little white cambric bands, that fluttered from my collar; and also was in the act of transferring to Grace the *Stordita ragazza! che cattivézza!* and *Ah! qual maledetta fanciulla!* that the poor Abbate used so liberally to bestow upon me; Grace the while rolling on the sofa with laughter, holding her side, and declaring, with the tears in her eyes, that I did poor dear Troppo better than any of them.

I had just taken off my spectacles, joined the long ends together in a triangle, as the Abbate was wont to do, given three sonorous hems, and was proceeding, after the storm, to the calm and explanatory part of the lesson, in my best Roman north-wind boom-along-a-corridor-accent, when the treacherous and unbolted

door opened wide, and in walked the Abbate himself and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues. The King of the Black Isles suddenly turned into black marble, in the "Arabian Nights," could not have stood more petrified, than did Grace and I.

"Ver pretty, 'pon my vord, young lady," said Mademoiselle, with a frown; "so dis is de vay you study your Italian lesson; fie, donc: I am shame of you."

The Abbate, who, however he might be provoked into scolding us himself, never could bear any one else to do so, said, with a good-natured laugh, as he patted on my unworthy head, the humble imitation of his own wig:

"Ah, ha, Signorina, you tink, I s'pose, the best vay for to mastère Italien, is to tak off your Italien mastère."

"Tiens!" suddenly exclaimed Mademoiselle Guilleragues, who had been investigating the mysteries of the pink calico bundle, and had just fished up her own miniature leghorn Golgotha, which she was now twirling round upon her hand; "Tiens! est-ce que par hasard mon chapeau aura fait des petits? Vat does all dis mean, Mademoiselle Sedley? I expec de trute from you of all dis enfantillage dat I see here?"

Grace, who would have at once told everything, had she herself been alone concerned, blushed and

hung her head; whereupon Mademoiselle was going to march her away into solitary confinement.

"Stop!" cried I, "Mademoiselle; Grace has nothing to do with it, it's all my fault. I was I know taking off the Abbate when you came in."

"Yes, you cannot ver vell deny dat," said Mademoiselle, "ven ve come in and catch you."

"I don't want to deny it," said I, indignantly; and thinking the best way of being impertinent was to make virtue my excuse, and tell the whole truth, I boldly added, assuming a bullying attitude that ill accorded with the pacific garb I then wore, "and I take off every one in the house, too, and *you* better than any one."

"Ah, vraiment! I shall be curious to see myself; dey say it is difficult to know one's self."

"If you won't punish Grace," rejoined I, anxious to capitulate on the best terms that I could, after this first tremendous explosion of valour, "I'll burn all these things, and never take off any one again."

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who understood children thoroughly, knew that though they will sing, dance, or talk by the hour, for their own amusement, they often become actually paralyzed with that most painful of all complaints, *mauvaise honte*, when asked to do either the one or the other before grown-up persons or strangers, and would willingly escape up the chimney, were such a mode of flight possible,

rather than be compelled to the exhibition. Therefore, quietly seating herself, and pointing to the Abbate to do the same, she said in a calm, determined voice, from which I knew there was no appeal:

"Mademoiselle, it is not for you to offer me conditions; and the punishment I shall impose upon you is, that you now go through your whole series of imitations, not excepting the Abbate Assai and myself, that I may the better judge what your ideas of us are."

This was indeed a terrible and unexpected blow, and so completely was I taken by surprise, that I burst out crying.

"Recollect, Mademoiselle, dat Monsieur l'Abbé and I wait; so perhaps ven you have done crying, you shall have de goodness to begin."

But I only sobbed the more, till Grace whispered me: "You had better, Mirry, for you know Mademoiselle will stay here all day till you do."

Re-actions were generally rapid with me, so I suddenly resolved upon making Nelly my pasquin, and sticking any little compliments upon her which I might see fit to address to Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; so, seizing the pink calico bundle, I retired behind an Indian screen, which was always my dressing room; and though the Abbate suggested that as I was already dressed for the part, I should begin with him, I declined; and two minutes after emerged from

ıd the screen such a facsimile of Nelly, not only
ıanner, but in look and costume, that though both
demoiselle and the Abbate tried hard not to laugh,
means of divers frowns and shakes of the head,
t it was all in vain, and they ended in a perfect
ıar, as my opening soliloquy and by-play were too
nuch for them. The moment I heard this peal, I
knew the game was in my own hands.

I entered with a listless saunter, as Nelly was wont
to do after a long and fruitless hunt after my most
impish self, and after announcing in a give-up-the-
ghost voice, that "de back wash dropping out of me
just," accompanying this *bulletin* by sticking my tongue
into my under lip as I walked; and pretending to take
pins out of my mouth, for there Nelly always had a
receptacle of all sizes, no doubt to give point to her
conversation, and sticking them with a jerk into a sort
of potato of black cloth that hung at the side of my
purple and yellow-flowered gown, I next proceeded to
irreverently fling down the brown beaver on the floor,
as if I had been abjuring a heresy, but underneath it
blazed the sunflower cap quite round, and circled by a
broad crimson ribbon tied in a tremendous bow and ends
in front; at length, I seated myself on a stool, rested both
my elbows with more ease than elegance on my knees,
and my chin, like an egg in an egg-cup, within both
my hands; and then with an energy that would have
satisfied even Demosthenes that I was in earnest, with-

l her, and sure enough she samed quite mad
a muzzle, by the way she did be taching
ıg, and tazing and twishting de poor childer
r siventeen sinses, just;" concluding the
a tirade against "the maneness of coming
nd poking into de room where childer was
limshelves, and den to thritten to punish
, inshtead of being sociable and plishent
ɔch! bad look to such foreigneering ways,
ged Boney himshelf."

Mademoiselle and the Abbate were wiping
from their eyes, I ran behind the screen,
few seconds re-appeared as the former, the
flowers under the bonnet giving me a most
appearance; but, bowing in a circular direc-
s to include every one in the room in my
as I curtesied, I then hung my shawl on
f a chair, upon which I seated myself, and
d, with a deep sigh, a conversation with an
Duc de Bouillon, about *notre chère France*
ie; and it would appear that my represen-

"Mais c'est un grand, je dirai même un beau talent, qu'elle a, cette petite. Ah, ha, Mademoiselle Fiametta, je l'utiliserai moi, pour tenir tête à vos sarabandes!"

Success, like faith, can remove mountains; and praise is a sort of magic spur, which can convert the the most jaded hack into a fleet Arab; so upon Mademoiselle's very injudicious panegyric, I darted behind the screen, and quick as lightning donned the flowing black gauze streamers, and all the rags and tags composing Lady Laura O'Shindy's dress; but as, among many others, this philosophical lady laboured under the delusion that she had a fine forehead, because it was awkwardly high, though very narrow, and curiously retreating, she used to strain all her hair off of her face, *à la Chinoise*, and having very large, round, calf-like eyes, which were incessantly rolling about, without ever, even by accident, seeing anything, this style of *coiffure* gave her the most extraordinary and ludicrous appearance of baldness, especially as her face was Quixotically long, and her nose equally so, bearing, in shape and colour, a strong family likeness to a ripe capsicum, or chili. Now, as it was impossible for me to elongate my face into the required length, Grace had painted me a card-board forehead and nose, the very image of Lady Laura's: this was, in short, a half-mask, which made me so ridiculously like her, that I think she herself, like the old lady in the

e especially as I managed to screw up my nto the sort of eyelet-hole which she con- he perfection of beauty; and, as she had very lay feet, generally cased in black leather shoes, ad a pair of boots made about a yard high, fed up to the top, where there was a little shoe of my foot. These sort of invisible stilts not sed me to be nearly Lady Laura's height, but ed me to adopt the stately, slow, prowling, rioc measure, in which she always moved, ich an earthquake, or a house on fire, would e hurried her out of; for, as a contemporary bserved, speaking of the solemn strut of Queen h: "There was in her Highness's demarch randity than dignity." And this "grandity" y Laura was considerably enhanced by her , morning and evening, a most extraordinary glass suspension-bridge, hung in chains across head. These gems, like herself, were a sort of

never been able to shake it off. They had too pale a lemon tint to be opals, and, in short, resembled nothing so much as consolidated barley-water, set in pinchbeck.

Grace always helped me in my *scena* of Lady Laura. All the bits of old gilt cornice that we could collect, and tables with sheets of gold paper pasted on them, and phials stuck full of dirty artificial flowers, subvarted pomatum and cold-cream jars, doing duty for china, composed this *mise en scène:* in short, all the trumpery we could possibly get together, to make it like Lady Laura's rooms, in which everything was sham but the dirt. Grace was to be discovered reading: the book selected, was the nursery edition of "Tom Thumb," with the splendid illustrations of his falling over head and ears into the batter-pudding; which I have always looked upon as an exquisite allegory of first love! in which hearts, like eggs, are just out of the shell only to be battered. This work was chosen, as calculated to provoke, and give a wider scope to Lady Laura's profound and philosophical remarks.

All things being now ready, I entered, or rather sailed, slowly and majestically, from behind the screen, *minaudant* considerably, and looking like a conceited young beauty, from the right to the left, for the homage which Lady Laura felt to be her due; and indeed, at that time, it was *still due,* as it had never yet been paid.

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues and the Abbate were

out giving him the trouble of abusing me in order to excite me, I poured forth such a torrent of invective against "dat outlandish Missh Killrag, or Mad Muzzle, ash dey call her, and sure enough she samed quite mad enough for a muzzle, by the way she did be taching and praching, and tazing and twishting de poor childer out of deir siventeen sinses, just;" concluding the whole with a tirade against "the maneness of coming achpying and poking into de room where childer was amusing dimshelves, and den to thritten to punish dem for it, inshtead of being sociable and plishent about it; och! bad look to such foreigneering ways, sure it banged Boney himshelf."

While Mademoiselle and the Abbate were wiping the tears from their eyes, I ran behind the screen, and in a few seconds re-appeared as the former, the curls and flowers under the bonnet giving me a most grotesque appearance; but, bowing in a circular direction, so as to include every one in the room in my salutation as I curtesied, I then hung my shawl on the back of a chair, upon which I seated myself, and commenced, with a deep sigh, a conversation with an imaginary Duc de Bouillon, about *notre chère France d'autre fois;* and it would appear that my representation was so devoid of all caricature and exaggeration, that both the Abbate and Mademoiselle began to applaud, and cry, "Brava! bravissima!" till at length the latter, forgetting all her prudence as a governess, turned to the Abbate, and said:

"But that would not be natural," objected Grace; "indeed, it would be quite impossible."

"Oh, that's no matter. The elevating principle should always be maintained, the standard should always be raised; because it's no matter what people may *be* in reality, they should always be made perfection in books. That's what all the reviews, especially the 'Proceed the Whole Boar,' and the 'Literary Latch-Key,' thought so fine, in my last novel of the 'Philanthropic Poisoner,' where I make the hero Onomancis,* though he has poisoned his grandmother, two maiden aunts, and a miserly second cousin, yet utter such sentiments of pure benevolence, and say so often that he intends giving their respective fortunes for the relief of suffering humanity, that the high moral tone he assumes of course outweighs the three-penn'orth of arsenic, which is the only slight error he had ever been guilty of."

Mademoiselle and the Abbate were in those convulsions of laughter which become painful, and were imploring me to stop, if I did not want to kill them, when the door opened for the second time, and my Aunt Marley, like "an embodied storm," rushed into the room; and while, with an eye of fire, and a cheek of flame, she told Mademoiselle and the Abbate that they ought to be ashamed of themselves to encourage

* We suppose from the Greek word Ονομα, which means a name.

me in my "vulgar ribaldry,"—she, at the same time, administered to me such a swinging box on the ear; with a slap in the face by way of postscript, that it not only floored poor Lady Laura's head-gear, barley-water ornaments and all, but broke her nose into the bargain, which I really was sorry for, as I felt "I ne'er should look upon its like again."

Under my Aunt Marley's gentle reproofs, which were no doubt a part of the system of universal benevolence and general philanthropy, I always preserved a stony stoicism, and no power on earth would have made me shed a tear, however great the pain of body or mind I might be suffering; in short, had I been at a preparatory school for martyrs, I could not have been better trained to silent endurance, and I now tried to console myself by thinking *chacun à son tour;* and, if I had been taking off Lady Laura, my Aunt Marley had favoured us with a *charade en action* of her other name.

"I desire," said my aunt, "that that young wretch may be sent to bed, without any supper, immediately:" it was then only six o'clock; "only," concluded my aunt, "let her be made to write to her vile father first, and tell him that instead of giving her his disgusting talent for mimicry, he had better send her money to buy clothes, as I can't for ever go on spending the money my uncle gives me for myself, on his brats. Come, Grace, darling, don't begin to cry,

because I have tried, for the sake of humanity, to correct the idiotic frivolity of your wretch of a sister. Go, Miss, go and write to your father directly, you're worthy of him."

"Poor papa, I am so glad! I love to write to him!" said I, clapping my hands, and at the same time indulging in a hardened sort of don't care jump.

Now, like many things in this chameleon world of ours, this was, at one and the same time, both true and false; for, though I was fond of corresponding with my poor father, I detested (as indeed I do to this day) the manual labour of writing; and my pot-hooks and hangers were at that time so atrocious, that Mr. Quillup, the writing master, generally wrote the letters in pencil first, and I inked them over; just as Mr. Tint, the drawing master, used to do more than half Fiametta's water-coloured landscapes, which were afterwards exhibited to an admiring circle as hers; while, though Grace had not yet got beyond crayons, every touch in them was, at least, her own. With this last command of my Aunt Marley's, I was marched off to write to my father, and ultimately to bed; poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues shrugging her shoulders, and muttering:

"Ciel! est-il possible? et cela s'appelle une dame!"

I soon forgot all my grievances in that profound and dreamless sleep, which only childhood knows; but at eleven o'clock that same night I was awakened with a

gentle pinching of the cheek, by my Aunt Marley. Was I dreaming, or was I awake? but there she stood, not frowning and angry, as I had last seen her, but radiant with smiles and beauty, and glittering with jewels. She was followed by a lady, with peculiarly bright black eyes, dark hair, divided down the centre, and flowing in ringlets, upon a neck as white as the ceiling itself, and cheeks like "the rose that's newly sprung in June;" her hands and arms, which were equally white, and models in shape, were covered with bracelets and rings. She wore a Brussels lace dress over pink satin, and very short petticoats, I suppose to display a beautiful small and well-turned foot and ankle. I afterwards learned that this flowing hair was a wig, this exquisite complexion paint, and the lady sixty-four, for it was the Margravine of Anspach. In the background of this tableau stood Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, Nelly, and the two English nursery-maids, looking very much as the seven burgesses of Calais may be supposed to have looked when going out to be hanged for the good of their country, before Queen Philippa begged them off.

"Get up, Mirry, darling," said my Aunt Marley affectionately, still playfully pulling my cheek: "I want you to take off Lady Laura, for this beautiful lady here," pointing to the Margravine; "and you must give us the Duc de Bouillon, too, which Mademoiselle de Guilleragues says you can do equally well; he him-

self is dying to see it, so get up quickly, and let them dress you, and then come down to the *sèvre* boudoir, there will be only the Margravine, the Duke, and myself."

Here the Margravine added her entreaties to my Aunt Marley's, kissed me, told me I was "a love," and remarked to my aunt that I had such a charmingly open countenance, which was likely enough, as I was yawning very widely at the time. I hope I am neither sulky nor resentful; I kissed my Aunt Marley, for I always did so with pleasure, whenever she asked me, for she was very nice to kiss, being so handsome, having such a pleasant skin, lovely mouth and teeth, and a sweet violet sort of breath. I also got up, was dressed, and went down, for all *that*, I was equally glad to do; but I felt the bitter injustice so keenly, of waking me at eleven o'clock at night, and coaxing and entreating me to do that for which I had been punished and sent to bed only five hours before, that neither threats nor entreaties could induce me to take off any one that night but myself, as I soon made a precipitous retreat, to avoid further importunity. Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, however, faithfully promising that as the Margravine (who was always either acting or dancing,—*car soixante-quatre ans, n'empêchent pas les sentiments!*) was to give scenes from Shakspeare and Racine on the following evening, in the small private theatre belonging to the house, I

should also give *my* scenes from nature; but as "Tartufe" is generally more *à-propos* to all times and places, the Margravine eventually deserted Shakspeare, and Racine, for Molière.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next morning after family prayers (at which Mademoiselle de Guilleragues being a Catholic was not present), just as we were adjourning to the study, my uncle with his arm round Grace's neck, and I with Fido in my arms, and Pomba at my heels, Mademoiselle knocked at the door, and requested to have five minutes' conversation with Sare George.

"Mademoiselle, je suis à vos ordres," said he rising, and offering her a chair.

"Mille grâces, Monsieur; I shall not detain you one five minute, what I have to say," said Mademoiselle, rising, and walking to the embrasure of the bay window, whither my uncle followed her, and where they conversed for some time in too low a tone to be audible, Mademoiselle gesticulating with much animation, and my uncle occasionally starting back a

pace or two, and saying "No!" and then pulling his under lip, and looking back at me with a smile playing in his eyes, which was only prevented from overflowing his whole face by the interposition of a pinch of snuff. To his "No!" Mademoiselle replied:

"Parole d'honneur."

My uncle then seemed to put in an objection, pulling his right ear, and looking very lachrymosely at his companion the while; if it was not an objection to what she had said, it was at least a difficulty, or something unpleasant; as I distinctly heard the final words: "But Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett."

"Pas si bête," replied Mademoiselle, laughing, "I get leave of de higher power first."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed my uncle, now rubbing his hands in perfect delight, as he added aloud: "Enfin, en véritable Guilleragues, je vois bien, Mademoiselle, que vous êtes rompue à toute la politique connue; et même inconnue! ha! ha! ha!" and so saying, he walked into the study which was off the library, and whither we all followed. Fido had scarcely commenced his *pas de fascination*, when there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," said my uncle, suddenly stopping in the midst of Malbrook, at the most interesting turn of the air, that which announces the hero's return *à la Páque, ou à la Trinité*, while Fido, not even waiting for the first epoch specified, thought it better to take advantage of the pause, and return imme-

diately to his natural position, on all fours. The intruder was Mole, whose special mission on earth appeared to be that of hunting us up; so he now came to say, that "my aunts wanted me immediately in the Chinese breakfast-room."

"And not me?" asked Grace.

"Mrs. Marley only said Miss Miriam, Miss."

Heaven help poor Miss Miriam; she felt amazingly as if she had received a summons to appear before the Holy Inquisition; for never was she so cited to appear alone, without there was some terrible catastrophe impending: however, Mole had said Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett, so I began to take courage, knowing from experience, that even when my Aunt Marley sat as Grand Inquisitor, my Aunt Bell when present was sure vigorously to oppose her veto. It was then only ten o'clock, so that I really had not had time to commit any fresh misdemeanour on that day. Oh, it must be that my Aunt Marley, not being able to scold me on the preceding night before the Margravine for my disobedience in not only refusing to play Punch when I was desired, but also for growling like the dog Toby, and slinking back to bed, I was now going to be paid off, as the sailors say, only not quite so pleasantly. So I looked imploringly at Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, in the hope that she would send word that we had not yet done our lessons, and that I should go as soon as I had. But instead of this, so seldom do things fall out as we plan and as we wish,

nor (in justice to God's mercy) it must be owned even always do they do so as we fear, Mademoiselle kissed me, and said:

"Go, my dear, and tell your aunts I shall be much obliged if dey will let you be in de school-room by twelve at latest, as Monsieur Angelot shall be here to give you a leçon de danse."

"But it is not Monsieur Angelot's day, this is only Wednesday," objected I.

"C'est égal, il va venir," said Mademoiselle, conducting me by both shoulders to the door.

With a palpitating heart, I followed Mole up the front stairs to the first landing, then through a red baize door, down three steps, and up another flight, (for it was a double house). Any one fond of bargains might have had my life for the lowest possible coin of this or any other realm, when Mole flung open the door of the Chinese room, so called from having a gold paper thickly populated with pink Chinese women, blue mandarins, and pea-green children, planting tea, gathering tea, and drinking tea, in which latter occupation my aunts were also engaged, for they were seldom together without there being hot water of some kind.

"Come in, darling, don't be afraid," said my Aunt Bell, pointing to a chair next to hers. Thus encouraged, I advanced, going first with a still trembling heart to my Aunt Marley, and saying:

"Good morning, Aunt Marley."

"Good morning, my dear," said she, kissing me: "would you like any more breakfast?"

My Aunt Bell, who, from long experience, was well aware of my somewhat undue partiality for thick cream and green tea, answered for me, as she placed a cup before me, leaving in the handsomest manner the cream and sugar entirely to my own discretion. I used, and therefore never will abuse them, though I suspect I was also indebted to them for a dreadful headache for the rest of the day, or it might be overwork, for I fagged hard that day: but of this by-and-bye.

"Would you like some prawns, Miriam?" asked my Aunt Marley, seeing that I looked wistfully at the pretty sort of red catherine-wheel before me.

"I should very much, if I may."

"To be sure, my child: the liberty of a human being should never be restricted," said my Aunt Marley. The voice for its placidity, and the sentiment for its universality, were both worthy of Lady Laura O'Shindy; but, being far beyond my capacity, I stuck to the prawns, which I was better able to digest.

I don't know how aldermen feel after a whole course of turtle, but I should think very valiant, for only after a second breakfast I know I felt equal to anything: so looking my Aunt Marley full in the face, I delivered Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' message, about my being in the school-room by twelve, to take a

dancing lesson, with as much boldness and authority, as if I had been a Garter King-at-Arms.

"And be sure you pay great attention to your dancing lesson to-day," said my Aunt Marley. And both my aunts looked at each other, and laughed.

"Whisper, Mirry," said my Aunt Bell, bending down to my ear; "tell me, did you ever try to take off Don José?"

"Dear me, no! that was far too awful." (The idea of such a thing even had never come into my head. I should as soon have thought of meddling with Bonaparte himself, Mrs. Boney, or the other — it's better not to mention his name even at this distance of time.) "No, never!" said I faintly.

"But don't you think you could?"

"Oh, of course I could, but I'd rather not."

"What, not to oblige!"

"Oblige who?"

"Why, Uncle Paulett."

"Oh, of course, anything for him! But he'd be angry, wouldn't he?"

"No, he'd be amused beyond everything."

"Would he, really?"

"Yes; do you think you could do him by this evening?"

"I don't know, it's so long since I have seen him; I've got to recollect him; but I'll try."

"There's a good child!" and my Aunt Marley rolled me over a peach, while the puzzle rolled in my

head, how I could be a good child and get peaches and cream to-day, the 15th of June, 1813, for doing the very thing for which I was called a vulgar little wretch, and punished and sent to bed yesterday, June the 14th, 1813. I might have thought till now, and I should not have been a bit nearer the solution. So it was perhaps lucky that James at this juncture entered with a letter, and said, the man who brought it was below, and wished very much to see either Mrs. Marley or Miss Paulett.

"Dear me!" said my Aunt Bell, breaking the large black seal, and running her eye over the letter, "it's from my mother, and that goose, Nelly's son, Dermot, is the bearer of it. What could have brought him over here?"

"Oh! do let him come up," said I, laughing: "I should like to see if he's still 'exthramely bould, Ma'am.'"

"Has he seen his mother or Lady Paulett?" inquired my Aunt Bell, without taking any notice of my request.

"He has seen Lady Paulett, Ma'am, but he won't see his mother, and begged she might not be told he was here, as she would be very angry with him."

"Let him come up," said my Aunt Bell.

And five minutes after the door re-opened, and Dermot pitched head foremost into the room, while his right leg, in the scrape with which he accompanied this graceful bow, was elongated horizontally behind

him to the great risk of Mr. James's teeth, which were fully visible to the naked eye grinning in the background. Whatever Dermot's juvenile attractions might have been, he certainly ran no risk of having his head turned, or turning anybody elses with them now. Short and thick set: not only were his shoulders those of a man of six feet high, but the ulterior portion of his person displayed that peculiar and exuberant species of conformation generally confined to female Hottentots, and supposed to be a provisional dispensation of nature, to enable them to initiate their offspring by times into sedentary habits.

A frieze coat, with large brass buttons and very short tails, set out itself and this portion of his figure to the greatest advantage; his waistcoat was of bright yellow with large reddish-brown leaves all over it, his shirt-collar highly starched and rising all round the back of his head, nearly as high as his ears: his hair was straight and lanky, and of a dusty brown, hanging like the choke of an artichoke over his ears and collar; a rim like a fillet round his head having been formed by the pressure of his hat; a red cotton-handkerchief was tied round his neck, the ends sticking straight out to the right and the left, like the wings of a spread-eagle. A large steel single-linked watch-chain dangled from his fob, with one turn-over brass seal, while an immense knob, or round red glass bead, or it might have been red cornelian, about the size of a turnip-radish, played Lord Chancellor to this great seal, and formed a

glowing contrast to the unpretending brown corduroy trousers upon which it rested, the said cords being very shiny at the knees, and very short and wide at the ancles, thereby revealing a pair of pepper-and-salt worsted stockings, terminating in a pair of well-greased brogues an inch and a half thick.

Under his left arm, he carried a huge black-thorn stick, while in his right hand he held a brownish-black felt hat with a very high crown, but much bulged out like a cupola at the top, with no traces of its ever having been flat, while round its narrow rim ran a narrow cord, tied in a small bow in front; his coat sleeves being exceedingly short, made him look as if he had lost his own clothes while bathing, and had swum into some other boy's, for Dermot was an Irish boy of three-and-twenty. His cheek-bones were extremely high, his nose was very short and red, sinking in in the centre like a scoop, and turning up at the end with the nostrils wide open, as if to keep his brains well aired; his mouth was very wide also, and so crowded with slightly projecting teeth, that the lips had some difficulty in closing over them; his eyes were blue, but with such red rims round them, that they had almost the effect of fuchsias. However, the only difficulty he himself appeared to have with his looks was caused by a sort of vagabond smile which he was for ever trying to overtake, pull suddenly up, and drive down his throat as it were, but all to no purpose, for if he got rid of it one minute it was back the next.

"What on earth brought you here, Dermot?" asked my Aunt Bell.

"Nothing on earth, Ma'am. I cum by wather, at laste nearly the same ting, by say, Ma'am, a-boord the 'Molly Malone,' Ma'am."

"Well, but what put it into your head to come?"

"Which? ish it what dhruv me into going, Ma'am?"

"Well, yes—what induced you to leave Ireland?"

"Och! divil a much of an injushemint, Ma'am, but the vury revarse, for it wash that spalpeen of an English middle-man, of Sur Joseph's, (de Saxon,) dat riz de rint on me shure, and I taught if I cud shee Sur Joseph, or any of de famly, may be I'd shoon make dat thafe of a Brooksh whistle to anoder thune."

"Why, you silly fellow, Sir Joseph's in Spain."

"Oh! indade Ma'am, sho I heerd, more'sh de pity; for itsh meshelf dat's not got where wid all to git back."

"Then you should apply to Lady Paulett; you are her husband's tenant, not ours."

"I did, Ma'am," said Dermot with a sigh, looking into his hat and shaking his head at it, as if it knew a great deal, but was too discreet to disclose it.

"And didn't she do anything for you?"

Dermot was silent, but setting his teeth, puffing out his lips and making very large eyes at his hat, which innocent victim he finally gave a tremendous thump to with his clenched fist on the top of its crown, that

drove it inwards like a butterfly net, or the crater of Mount Vesuvius. My Aunt Marley now repeated the question.

"Oh! indade, Ma'am," said Dermot at last, turning his head quite round and looking towards the window as if he was blushing, "I cudn't."

"Why not, pray?"

"Becase itsh too bad intirely, Ma'am."

"What's too bad?" asked both my aunts in a breath.

"What Sur Joseph's wife dun to me, Ma'am."

"Nonsense!"

"Oh! indade, ladies, it wash a great dale worse dan nonsense; Dermot Bawn ish not de boy to mind a little nonshense wid gentle or shimple."

"Well, but can't you say what it was?"

"I cudn't Ma'am, I cudn't; itsh too bad intirely, and de shaints forbid dat I should ever tell such a ting on any of de noble name of Paulett; and dat a shaymale woman, too!"

Up to this point, my aunts had only been curious, but now they grew desperate, and the idea of Lady Paulett's having done anything too disgraceful to be told, was such music to my Aunt Bell's ears, that she thought she ought at least to remunerate the musician; so taking a guinea out of her purse she held it up to Dermot, and it was evident her expectations were raised to the highest pitch, for she told me to leave the room; but I preferred remaining, so merely sank down

with my hands on the floor half under the table, and she was too intent upon forcing out this portentous secret to remark that I had not obeyed her.

"Now, Dermot," said she, holding up the guinea, "I'll give you this, if you will tell me what Lady Paulett did?"

"Oh, den indade whin one can part wid a sacret for nine times its value, it would be a sin and shame to kape it," said Dermot; and here there was a momentary pause of such breathless suspense, even I, listening with my mouth open, that the silence almost became audible. At this juncture Dermot, wiping the back of his right-hand hastily across his mouth, made three measured strides to where my aunts were sitting, and bending forward, first to my Aunt Marley, holding his hat up to the side of his face, and leaving his right leg in abeyance in mid air, like John of Bologna's Mercury, and then pursuing the same pantomime to my Aunt Bell, he said in a sonorous stage whisper, that resounded through the whole room, and might have been heard outside, if James was playing "the listening slave" at the door: "*As I'm a living man she gav me half a crown!*"

Disappointed as both my aunts were at this wonderful announcement, it was impossible to help laughing at the ludicrous seriousness of Dermot's face, especially when he stepped back with the same measured strides with which he had advanced, and said, pulling up his shirt-collar, which was truly a work of supererogation:

"Oh, indade, ladies, I dun't wondther at yer no saming to b'lave it, dere is shome tingsh *too bad* to bey b'laved, and datsh one uv dem."

"But why won't you see your mother? you ought to do so?"

"Why, you shee Ma'am I've outgrow'd her."

"Outgrown her! what on earth do you mean? you are not as tall as she is, and even if you were, surely, that should not prevent you seeing her?"

"Oh, itsh not by raison of her hoight, Ma'am, but mine; for you say (see) when onchet a 'ooman, and dat 'ooman yer moder, hash had de bating of ye, dey do be mighty apt to forgit dat yer back iver growsh too broad for de schtick, or yer ares (ears) too big to be boxshed, and datsh all I've to shay agin my moder; for if she'd only kape her handsh to hershelf, and not make sho fray (free) wid me in de way of thomping she'd be as good a little 'ooman ash iver shtepped."

"Well, but what do you mean to do?" asked my Aunt Marley.

"Oh, indade, Ma'am, itsh not what *I* mane to do, but *you* mane to have de gudnessh to do for me."

"Why, really," replied my aunt, "I don't very well know what you're fit for: what would you like to be?"

"At won time, Ma'am, I tought of lishting for a sojer, but to tell you de trute de idaya of fading de crowsh in furrin partsh ish not plishent; and shinsh I've shane de jauntlemen below schtairsh, sho grand

and sho lazy-like in deir foine blue and shilver and white uneyforums, I tink I'd like to be in de fut, Ma'am."

"In the foot?"

"Yesh, Ma'am, a futman."

Both my aunts burst out laughing, in which I heartily joined, at the idea of Dermot as a footman; so imagining that his "vaulting ambition had o'er-leaped itself," he added, arranging the indentures of his hat:

"Or if you tink a futman's too much, ladies, I shudn't mind beginning as a tay boy. Shure I cud have got an iligant plache ash tay boy, in de town of Clanfuddle, only I wudn't demane meshelf by going to sarvish in de teeth of my own eshtate, as I may shay; for of a foine day, from Mrs. Major Meginesses back windeys, I cud see de tatch of de cabin, and de pate schstack, ash plain ash de noshe on me fashe."

"By the bye," said my Aunt Marley, "I recollect now that Lady Laura O'Shindy wants a servant; she's so odd in all her ways that I think he might do very well for her," concluded she, lowering her voice, and appealing to my Aunt Bell.

"The very thing! and then her *ménage* would be perfect; not a single absurdity wanting," laughed my Aunt Bell; "for as my uncle remarked the other day, Burke says, 'there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous,' and unfortunately it is just this

one fatal step that poor Lady Laura is always taking."

"Well," said my Aunt Marley aloud, addressing Dermot, "should you like to live with Lady Laura O'Shindy?"

"Oh indade, Ma'am, I hope I'd know me plache better nor to have a shindy wid any lady dat I lived wid," said Dermot, drawing up with a stupendous air of self-respet.

"It's to be hoped so," said my Aunt Marley, laughing; "but I'm speaking of Lady Laura O'Shindy, Lord Clanfuddle's sister: you know who I mean: she married Captain O'Shindy."

"Whew!" half whistled Dermot, placing his forefinger at the side of his own nose; "you've made me sinsible, Ma'am, de lady dat wash ordered long walkah by Doctor O'Hoolhagan, who toult her to follow her noshe; just, ave coorshe I remember now, for it wash a common shaying about our plache, when dey did be talking of de Lord's famly, to obsarve: 'Thrue for ye, Lord Clanfuddle knows mosht; but den shure it's sixh of won, and half a dozen of de oder, for Lady Laura hash most nose.'"

"Well, shall I speak to Lady Laura about taking you?"

"I'd be behoulden to you, Ma'am, if you wud. May I ax what short of uneyforum she gives her sarvents? The Clanfuddle uneyforum, I know, ish

crimshon and goold, wid white fachings; but I've heerd dat whin ladies marries its deir hushbansh uneyforum dat deir sarvents wearsh, so dat may make a differ."

"I should'nt think," said my Aunt Bell, laughing, and turning to my Aunt Marley, "that poor Mr. O'Shindy was entitled to any arms, and therefore can scarcely have a livery; so Lady Laura, with her love of the beautiful, as she calls it, which enables her totally to dispense with the useful and the necessary, and makes her have the strangest freaks in dress and furniture, by way of what she calls assorting colours after nature, has I believe, condemned her servants (as she calls her solitary "*tay boy*," though the constant change of them does make them plural) to what she denominates a rural livery, namely, a grass-green coat, with yellow facings. Lady Laura's livery, or uniform, as you call it," concluded my Aunt Bell, aloud, addressing Dermot, "is green, with yellow cuffs and collar, and the Clanfuddle crests on the buttons—a boar and goose, gorged with a ducal coronet."

"Grane and yaller! ye say, Ma'am?" cried Dermot, in a shrill voice, striding forward two steps, to make sure that he had caught the sounds a-right, "Shure I'd look mighty like a field of buther-cups in such a uney-forum as dat; de paple might talk of de moving bog den, wid some raison, when dey'd say me marching down de strate; den if datsh de uneyforum Ma'am, I

suppose her Leedyship givesh only a wishp of hay for de hat insthead of a goold band?"

"Why what difficulties you are making, Dermot, I thought you wished to go out to service?"

"I do sho, Ma'am, but there's a differ I'm thinking betune (between) going out to sarvice and going out to grassh!"

"It's all the same thing for you, Dermot, depend upon it," laughed my Aunt Bell, "for you'd be equally an ass to refuse."

"Well," replied Dermot, with a sigh of philosophical resignation, as he appeared to be mentally consoling himself with the reflection of Solomon's inferiority in all his glory to the lilies of the field, and why not to the buttercups, too? "Well, Ma'am, the Lord knowsh best, and ash Lady Laura ish a grassh widdy, I shuppose it's not for the loikes of me to mind for wanchet (once) in a way, being a grassh tay boy!"

My aunts, as soon as they could speak for laughing, promised to use their influence with Lady Laura on his behalf, and in the meanwhile, recommended him to lose no more time in seeing his mother, as she would have good reason to be angry with him if she heard he was come, and had never asked for her.

"May be, Leedys, yez wud have de gudness," said he, now compressing his much persecuted hat like a nut-crackers, "to shend for her here, and jest lay yer commandsh on her to kape her hands off me."

With another laugh, my aunts acceded to this request, and ringing the bell to have the breakfast-things removed and Nelly summoned, the servant who answered it announced to my aunts that the Margravine was up, and wished to see them in her dressing-room, and to me, that Monsieur Angelot was waiting in the school-room.

CHAPTER XIV.

On my way to the school-room I met Mr. Waltham, who was carefully examining every step of the stairs, and muttering to himself: "It's no use, I'm sure it must have blown away upon the ramparts when I took out the note to give to Colonel Clavering."

"Have you lost anything, Mr. Waltham?" asked I.

"Yes, my dear Miss Miriam, I have had a serious loss, and if you could help me to find it, I should be very grateful to you. I have lost a fifty-pound note, that I was going to send to my mother; and what she'll do, or what I shall do, I'm sure I don't know."

"I'm sure," said I, "that Uncle Paulett will give you another;" that being the readiest consolation that I could suggest.

"Oh! for heaven's sake, Miss Miriam," cried he, colouring up; "whatever you do, don't tell Sir George;

first, because he would replace it I'm afraid; and next, because he would be so very angry with my carelessness, and justly, too; for he has no toleration for want of order and unbusiness-like habits, and he would think I was unfit for the place I hold, if I could not even take care of, and manage my own very trifling affairs, which trifling though they be, comparatively speaking, are of such vital importance to those I love best in the world;" and the poor young man's eyes filled with tears.

"Where do you think you lost it?" said I.

"I fear it was on the ramparts, where the wind was very high, and that it must have blown into the sea. I was opening my pocket-book to give a note Sir George had sent me with to Colonel Clavering, and I fear it was then that it must have dropped out."

"We were going to the rope-walk," said I, "after dinner; but I'll look for it everywhere, as soon as we've done our lessons; and I dare say Mademoiselle de Guilleragues will let us walk to the ramparts instead; so don't fret about it, for between us all, I dare say it will be found."

"Thank you, dear," said Mr. Waltham, patting my head, "but as I'm to see Sir George at five to give him Colonel Clavering's answer, pray don't say anything to him about it, there's a good girl."

As I was by no means of Mr. Waltham's opinion on this subject, I made no promise, but broke from him, and began ascending the stairs three steps at once to make up for the time I had lost in talking to him.

"*Arrive donc!*" said Mademoiselle, impatiently, when I entered the school-room, where I found Monsieur Angelot busily engaged fastening a pair of blunt gilt spurs on some little red boots, while he himself had a pair of similar ones on, and also blue full trousers tight at the ancles and braided down the sides and embroidered with silver; while he wore a short jacket or rather vest, with pointed ends in front, richly and elaborately embroidered in silver; a little scarlet-velvet Hungarian cap on his head, very much on one side, with a straight spun-glass feather in it.

I laughed when I saw him, but exclaimed:

"What a beautiful dress!"

"Well," said he, "you are to have just such another, only with a tunic over the trowsers, if you are a good girl, and learn the dance I am going to teach you this morning, so as to be able to dance it this evening before your uncle and all the company staying in the house."

"On the stage," interposed Mademoiselle.

"Oh, I don't think I'd have courage to dance before so many people."

"Nonsense," said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; "look at Miss Fiametta and her Boleros, she has no *mauvaise honte*, and why should you?"

"But she dances so well."

"And what's to prevent you, pray, from doing the same, you, who can imitate every one so exactly; there is nothing to prevent your doing everything well

if you have but a proper model set before you; and as you have that unlucky talent for mimicry, I must see if I can't turn it to good account, and make it available in all your studies. I have ménagé une petite surprise for your good uncle Sare George, after dat eternal Bolero to-night, and Madame Son Altesse la Margravine shall be delighted, too."

"But what dance is it:—a bolero?"

"Mieux que ça: a dance dey have never yet seen in England, de Cracovienne," said Mademoiselle; "so now I shall tank you to imitate Monsieur Angelot till you shall be him."

"Oh," said I, laughing, "that would be false coining, wouldn't it?" This was in allusion to Mademoiselle having told us that there was a coin called an Angelot, current in France at the time of Philippe de Valois; for she had a very pleasant way of teaching us not only the gossip of history, but of filtering for us its truths; and not stultifying our minds and cultivating our prejudices by those hollow, shallow fallacies, stretched on the narrow Procrustes bed of party-spirit, and called "Abridgments of History for the use of Schools;" whereby young England is taught such preposterous falsehoods, as to call Queen Elizabeth "The Virgin Queen," and to consider her as a great princess, instead of being early taught that no one so utterly vicious and wicked as she was, could be great, for there is no real greatness, but goodness. Omnipotence itself, had it only created this stupendous

universe with its crowning miracle, of immortal souls to destroy and not to save, might have been wonderful, but would not have been great, for goodness is the universal and harmonious voice of light, that speaks *to all* from out its works.

For this reason did Mademoiselle de Guilleragues teach us to look upon that be-incensed beldam, Queen Elizabeth, as what she really was, namely, Harry the Eighth in petticoats; in short, she skimmed for us Whittaker, Campbell, Murdin, Stuart, Smith, Higgins, and Heylin, whose combined bundle of facts clearly establish that Elizabeth's politics were one vast system of chicane, and wrong towards all nations, and her life one of mischief and misery—of mischief to others, and misery to herself; hence her lowerings of ill-will, and her whirlwinds of tyranny; hence too, her craving for flattery and false renown, as there are none so tenacious of their reputation as the bad evil doers, who will go miles out of their way, should any of their iniquities transpire to threaten the innocent hearers of them with unmeasured vengeance and actions for defamation if they presume even to believe what they have heard; whereas, when the good hear the grossest calumnies of themselves, they only smile with either pity or contempt, and say: "It's a comfort to think it should only be a calumny, and not the truth;" and therein consists at once their best defence and greatest consolation. Elizabeth's murder of her guest and cousin, Mary, is only one among her

many crimes; impatient like all villains in whatever thwarted her villany; she is, for her, almost amiable in her taunts to Amyas Paulet and Drury, after their refusal to assassinate Mary, Queen of Scots; when she merely calls them "nice and precise fellows, who in words would do great things for her safety, but in deed perform nothing;" and yet, this vestal, this nymph, this Diana, (query Hecate)? as she was then called—this murderess as she really was –(forwarding the butchery of the St. Bartholomew in France with her gold, while her rank hypocrisy affected to deplore it with her tears. Oh! surely the tears of hypocrites must make the fires of the infernal regions blaze more fiercely!) This Gloriana, sweet, tender, pious soul, was almost petrified with horror at the barely narrated execution of her unfortunate kinswoman, which she had without remorse plotted and commanded. Another proof this, were any more wanted, of how appalling even the name of vice is to the vicious and the criminal, especially when it is the sound of their own vices and crimes that falls upon their ear; the wrong is nothing, *the having it known everything.*

Camden expresses a sort of surprise, that "not content to mangle the fine person of Mary with the murderous axe, she proceeded to a still greater excess of guilt, and exerted all the arts of hell to murder her reputation;" but in so doing, he evinces but little knowledge of human nature, for violent aggressors have but one way of expiating the great

wrong they have done their victims, and that is, by blotting it out with still greater ones, and telling lies of them till they themselves believe them truths, which is to the worthless and the wicked a species of inverse absolution. Truly, as one of the historians of this worst, bad woman, (not excepting Catherine de Medicis), asserts: "Elizabeth had no sensibilities of tenderness, and no sentiments of generosity;" while another adds, with equal truth: "She looked not forward to the awful verdict of history; she had no dread even of the infinitely more awful doom of God." And Dr. Campbell observes: "Elizabeth seems to have been in all her capacities of wickedness, a woman exceedingly wicked, to have united equally the sensual and the malignant corruptions of mankind in her own person; to have had them in a very violent degree, and to have superadded the highest degree of hypocrisy to both; and so have been a very prodigy of flagitiousness from all."*

Elizabeth's religion (if it be not almost a blasphemy to couple so holy a term with *her* name) may be estimated by her underhand bribery, and abetting of the massacre of the Huguenots in France, in order to throw odium

* To quote from the ablest historian of them all—the eloquent pages of Macaulay, not then written—wherein the rise and progress of the Reformation is thus summed up: "The work which had been begun by Henry, the murderer of his wives, was continued by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest."

upon the Catholics, and at their expense show forth the superior purity of newly-budding Protestantism in her own kingdom; for, from first to last, of the self-styled Reformation, the Established Church has been nothing more than a first-class *State Engine*. Her revolting habit of swearing, and the impious oaths she selected, may be evidenced as another proof of her piety; but more conclusive than all, is the mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in her closing scene, which, as Collier has it, "was indeed dark and disconsolate;" as must be that of all those who, like her, have not been content with doing much and terrible wrong, but must also insist upon being thought right, and concealing the hideous features of vice with the fair mask of virtue.

Robert Cary (Earl of Monmouth), one of her most assiduous courtiers, says, in the Memoirs of his own life: "I found the Queen, in her last sickness, seated upon cushions, where she persisted in remaining on the ground four days and nights at least. I used the best words I could to persuade her from this melancholy, but it was too deeply rooted in her heart to be removed. In her discourse with me, she fetched not so few as forty or fifty great sighs, whereas I had never known her to fetch a sigh before, except when the Queen of Scots was beheaded. She refused all sustenance, and also to go to bed; and she grew worse and worse, because she would be so, and refused all remedies."

Camden says that she called herself "a miserable and forlorn woman," and exclaimed, "they have put a cyve about my neck: I have no one to trust in. My condition is strangely changed."

But Parsons, in his discussion of Barlow's "Answer," gives the following stranger particulars of this bad woman's departure on her long journey. He had them from the courtiers of one who was going where she would find no more. "The Queen told two ladies of her court, as she lay in bed at the beginning of her last illness, that she thought she saw her own body lean and fearful, and in light of fire; and from that she left her bed, and would not return to it; and she said on one occasion, that if her attendants knew what she had seen the last time she was in bed, they would not ask her to go there any more.

"As for the prelates who came to her, requesting her to consider her approaching end, she cholerically cursed them, and bid them be packing: indeed, her Highness's grace seemed to place more confidence in charms and spells than in prayer to God; and she wore (and had done so for a long time) a piece of gold on her ruff, by means of which an old woman in Wales was said to have attained the age of one hundred years: and she also had the card called the Queen of Hearts nailed to the bottom of her chair for luck, where it was found after her death."

Oh, great and mighty Protestant Princess, whose much-vaunted masculine understanding, it would ap-

pear, only served to give you masculine vices, and the still more masculine privilege of exercising them with impunity, surely spells and filters, e'en golden though they might be, and giving the poor Queen of Hearts a set down, was after all a sorry way of defending the faith; at any rate, the poor Queen of Hearts, so defended, might have exclaimed with Socrates, "Heaven defend me from my friends!" For my own part, I'd rather have been the Queen of Scots, even had I, on that account, been doomed, like a parish bride, to undergo a third time of "ax(e)ing," than have been that hapless Queen of Hearts, to have sat thus, *nolens volens*, "in the seat of the scornful!"

But to return to Monsieur Angelot, whom Queen Elizabeth (to do her justice) would not have neglected for so long a time, in consideration of his being remarkably good-looking, and having a most symmetrical figure and graceful *tournure*, which, in this Hungarian dress, "was set out to the best advantage," though not exactly "to pleasure the Queen," as in the case of Sir Walter Raleigh.

The spurs having been at length adjusted to the little red boots, Grace, who seemed in as great a state of excitement as Mademoiselle de Guilleragues herself, put them on for me; and just as I was clanking my spurs in the greatest possible delight, a knock was heard at the door, and Mademoiselle having said, "Come in," Madame Morel entered, with a pair of red, full trowsers, a blue cashmere tunic, seamed with silver-braid, and

the little red *soufflé*-pan sort of red cap and feather, saying the jacket and white sleeves would be finished by eight in the evening; and as the exhibition was not to take place before ten or eleven, Mademoiselle expressed herself much satisfied with Madame Morel's expedition. A short flitting behind the screen soon enabled me to achieve my toilet, and when I re-appeared, Angelot saluted me, *en militaire*, with his right hand open at the side of his forehead. I immediately returned it in a similar manner; while he and Mademoiselle cried in the same breath:

"Fort bien, à merveille!"

Mademoiselle sola-ing *ça-ira*; but quickly adding, as she crossed herself, "Dieu me pardonne ces vilaines paroles!"

As it was utterly impossible that any one could play the violin and dance the Cracovienne too, or at least that they could play first-fiddle, if they did, Angelot for once discarded his beloved Cremona, and Mademoiselle seated herself at the piano, to play the air for him to dance to, he ordering me to do everything I saw him do; but I told him that I was sure I never could learn it in that way, but that if he would have the goodness to dance it twice from beginning to end, I thought I could then manage it. Accordingly he did so, bowing as if round the theatre first, but still *en militaire*, and at the conclusion, Mademoiselle taking it for granted that I was to be overwhelmed with plaudits, taught me how to curtsey gracefully,

with my hand pressed to my heart, dumb-showing the "gratitude that's too deep for words," (which indeed, I suppose, all gratitude is, as one never hears a word about it from those whom one has served the most). This I found the most difficult part of the lesson, perhaps from its being too well known to the public at large to admit of any inaccuracy in my amateur version of it; as in fact it was the stage edition of that great Husting's epic, "The Proudest Day of My Life!"

At length, having succeeded, to the mutual satisfaction of Mademoiselle and of Angelot, in indenting the intense gratitude I should have to feel deeper into my heart, from the pressure from without of both my hands, I commenced the Cracovienne, meeting with every encouragement from the assembled trio. Although I made three mistakes the first time of dancing it; but having mastered it the second time, and given to my feet due emphasis, and to my face due expression, Mademoiselle was so enchanted, that she rushed from the piano, and clasped me in her arms; while Angelot, not presuming to do likewise, hugged himself —few men can embrace what they hold dearer—and declared, that if his grandfather had been called *Le Dieu de la Danse,* or *Le Dé-o de la Danse,* as he called himself (for Angelot's mother had been a daughter of *the* Vestris), that I deserved to be called *La Déesse de la Danse*; and Grace gave it as her decided opinion, that the golden clink of my spurs would beat the castanets hollow; and so they ought, for two

mortal hours had I devoted to achieving this cha
little accomplishment, that could be of no earth
to me in after-life; and yet, whatever is amusin
agreeable, is to a certain degree useful, only
ladies don't exactly delight their friends, and
bute to the well-being of society, by dancing E
and Cracoviennes *en costume*; however, without
either the one or the other, they are not, even in
enlightened days, educated *pro aris et focis*.

It being now two o'clock, our dinner was annou
and Angelot dined with us by Mademoiselle's i
tion, that after dinner I might have one more les
the Cracovienne, which indeed was exercise en
but, as I wished to look for Mr. Waltham's fifty
note, Mademoiselle kindly took us to the ram
where I had a great many fruitless runs after eve
of paper or flake of goose-down that chanced
giving themselves the benefit of a little air
time.

END OF VOL. I.

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MIRIAM SEDLEY;

OR,

THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

BY

LADY BULWER LYTTON.

> Heart—Affluence in discursive talk,
> From household fountains never dry;
> The critic clearness of an eye,
> That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;
> * * * * * *
> And Manhood fused with female grace,
> In such a sort the child would twine
> A trustful hand, unasked with thine,
> And find its comfort in thy face.
>
> ALFRED TENNYSON'S *In Memoriam*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MIRIAM SEDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

On our return home, Mademoiselle inquired if my uncle was out, and hearing that he was in the library with Belzoni, she gave us leave to go to him, and I was to say that she was *très contente de moi*, neither more, nor less, and that he would know what that meant. Accordingly I ran in, singing my own praises, and, like most persons who do so, was taken at my own valuation; for who can know our merits half so well as ourselves, and if we don't proclaim them, how can we expect the world to take the trouble of finding them out? Reputation is the only trumpet that heralds worth, or talent, and unless we blow the key note, others seldom sound it for us.

After we had kissed my uncle, and asked Belzoni for Bloom, the eagle, the albatross, and the petrel,

they resumed their conversation, which appeared to have been about Philip Vavasour, for my uncle sat knitting his brow, as was his wont when he felt uncomfortable, or perplexed as to how to render some one a service, or confer a kindness without being found out, or, as when it sometimes happened, he had taken the liberty of asking people to his own house, and a great domiciliary battle had to be fought, in order to vanquish my aunts into receiving them properly.

"The whole thing is wrong," said my uncle, while Belzoni seemed to listen with the eye of a hawk to every word he uttered. "The boy is a fine boy, and has plenty of intellect, which I am sorry to perceive has been forced in a hot-bed, without any corresponding training, pruning, or fostering of his moral qualities; and intellectual pre-eminence, without the ballast of moral solidity, and the genial warmth of the affections, becomes too often nothing more than the most subtle, astute, and remorseless want of principle, which leaves no vice unexhausted, and no virtue unassumed. Now it is evident to me, that this poor boy has had that great germ of all evil—pride—nurtured in him—I mean the false Lucifer; pride that makes the pronouns *I* and *my* the axis upon which all things turn. *My* family! and, *my* honour! And with such persons, honour does not so much consist in abstaining from wrong doing, as in resenting the slightest accusation of it. It is evident he has been

taught to despise his mother because she is poor through the infamy of his father; while his father's family, from being rich, though worthless in every sense of the word, are the gods of his idolatry. For as his uncle, Dingly Vavasour, pays for him at Eton, according to our English tariff of morality, he is the person the boy is taught wholly and solely to look up to, honour, and obey; and as a proof of how well the system works, it was only the other day that I was imploring him, for his own sake, to try and recompense his poor mother by his own kindliness, worth, and, above all, single-mindedness, for a little of the cruel injuries she had sustained at the hands of his father; a few of which, thinking him now old enough to know the truth, I then detailed to him, winding up with an exordium to avoid his father's and uncle's fatal vice of gambling."

"Well," interrupted Belzoni, "and what did he say?"

"Drew up in a way that would have been highly ridiculous in a brat of his age, had it not been revolting and disgusting, and said: 'Sir, you seem to forget that you are speaking of *my family!*'"

"The contemptible little wretch!" broke in Belzoni. "So that was the only feeling the recital of his mother's injuries elicited from him?"

"The only one," sighed my uncle.

"But how comes it," resumed Belzoni, "that he is so completely under the control of his father's family,

and beyond that of his mother? for, generally, even a husband's omnipotent tyranny ceases with his life."

"Don't you know that money is power?"

"Hah!" said Belzoni, drawing a long breath, and tightly folding his arms.

"And," pursued my uncle, "when Lady Dora Capel forced her poor daughter Mary to marry that unmitigated wretch, Edgar Vavasour, she thought him heir to Marmiondale, as, indeed, he was, being his father's favourite; but his vices carrying him off prematurely, and the Vavasours being of that amiable temperament which seems to like wickedness for wickedness' sake, even more than for any fancied advantages that may accrue to them through its honourable means, old Vavasour, when he died, left Marmiondale (it being unentailed) to his son Dingly, leaving it optional with him to bequeath it to young Philip Vavasour, his nephew, upon the express proviso, that the boy was to be wholly and solely under his control, and that he never did anything to offend him. Here was the last and worst blow of all to his poor mother; for, living in a cottage in Pembrokeshire, upon a beggarly jointure of £300 a year, she felt she had no right to exert the authority the law, as a free woman, then allowed her of sole control over her son; as, by so doing, she should be marring his worldly prospects in every way, as she could not afford to give him even the education of a gentleman."

"Not, certainly, if a public school is considered a

sine qua non of such an education; but she was wrong, she should have thought more of her son's soul, and less of his worldly career," said Belzoni.

"She *was* wrong," said my uncle, with a deep sigh; "and, poor soul, she is likely to pay dearly for it, as all do who err from want of judgment, and not from evil intent; the latter generally thrive, as, to do the devil justice in this world, he certainly takes care of his own. But I fear poor Mary's bitter trials are not ended yet; for this boy has been trained in the proper school, to perpetuate them as part of the Vavasour code, which he appears already fully to have imbibed, is that women are mere domestic machines, only fit to be kicked and incarcerated while young, and left to starve when old; and next to his defunct gambler of a father, and his living gambler of an uncle, upon the strength of his being the heir of Marmiondale, he evidently thinks himself the most important personage on the face of the whole universe."

"Oh, then, if that is the tenure upon which he holds his grandeur, I advise the young gentleman to lose no time in reforming his manners, or rather his morals; and, above all, in retrenching his pride," said Belzoni, with a curious expression of face, as he hastily put on his gloves, and was preparing to take his departure, in which, however, he was interrupted, by Colonel Clavering being announced.

"Don't go, for heaven's sake! my dear Belzoni," said my uncle, pressing him back into the chair; "it

is that puritanical fellow, Clavering, a pretty colonel of engineers, truly; only fancy, last Sunday, having had intelligence from Boswell, that four French privateers had been cruising about all night. I sent off an express to Clavering, to throw up some additional fortifications, and have all the guns of the martello towers double-manned; and would you believe it, the fellow positively refused, because it was Sunday; as I sent him word if the enemy should come, I hoped he would be the first ass that fell into the ditch, and that none of his pharisaical tribe would pick him out, because it was the Sabbath."

"I am come, Sir George," said Colonel Clavering, now entering and booing, as only Scotchmen can boo, "to explain this leetle meesunderstanding aboot the fortifications your excellency wished thrown up, they are noo done; but whan I first recaved the order, you ken it was the Laird's day, in whach we are expressly enjoined to do nae monner o' wark; and ye are aware, Sir George, that I hold Calvinistic doctrines."

"Perfectly aware of it, Sir," replied my uncle, backing his chair, and rubbing down the shin of his right leg, as it lay crossed over his left knee; "but I hold, that in an engineer at least, *good works* are as essential as *faith*."

"Ha, ha, ha! capital!" laughed Belzoni.

While the matter-of-fact Celt merely replied:—

"That great mon, John Calvin, preached a deferent doctrine."

"Pooh, pooh, Sir," cried my uncle, taking a polemically vehement pinch of snuff; "don't talk to me of Calvin; he was not a great man by any means, but only a bad, a very bad man, Sir: as, indeed, were most of those who acted

> 'As if religion were intended,
> For nothing else but to be mended.'

And if you have not read Jeremy Taylor, Sir, I have, and remember that he says, and says truly: 'All the ages of the Church were extremely curious to observe, when any new teachers did arise, what kind of lives they lead, it was generally found that they were very wicked; and God never makes use of wicked instruments to reform his Church.' And look, Sir, at the life and death of Calvin: but his tenets are enough for me, as they are not only written in blood, but in fire."

"A weel," said Clavering, turning up his eyes in solemn horror, "I neever heerd ony one venture upon a word agin Calvin befure."

"Then, Sir," said my uncle, "you never could have read Audin, Berthellier, Gruet, Gentiles, Bolsec, Ami, Perrin, Francis Favre, and Servetus, with hosts of others, and consequently can know very little about the matter, or you would know what a disgrace Calvin was to humanity and still more so to religion; for as Dr. Trevern says, 'he also crushed the liberties of the people, as well as Luther, but in a more

insidious manner. He robbed them of their freedom in the name of liberty a common trick with most Reformers of the age. A foreigner, he insinuated himself into Geneva, and serpent-like, coiled himself round the very heart of its republic, nor did he relax his hold as long as he lived. Woe to him who did not uncover at the approach of Calvin; he was fined. Woe to him who dared to contradict, or even to differ from him; he was brought before the Consistory, and menaced with excommunication. Woe to the girl who presented herself to be married with a bunch of flowers in her cap. Woe to him who danced on the day of his wedding; he was imprisoned for three days. Woe to the young married lady, if she wore shoes according to the then fashion of Berne; she was publicly reprimanded. Hence is derived the Swiss saying of, 'Woe to the cat that catches a mouse on a Sunday; woe to the spider who lays holds of a fly, however hungry he be, on the seventh day; and woe, woe to the citizen who shall take a walk with his family on the Sabbath!' In short, the seeds of Calvin's twenty-four years' theocracy at Geneva—were scaffolds, swords, fire, and faggots; and if as much blood did not flow during his reign of terror, as there did during the French revolution, it was no fault of his, but because the population was smaller; and to this day, the Genevese reap the fruits of his sumptuary laws in their intense parsimony and hypocrisy; and I doubt if even his horrible and

fiendish persecution of Michael Servetus, coupled with his final butchery of him, was more atrocious than the crimes he enacted through his domiciliary police, who, through the most unimaginable treachery, wormed themselves into the privacy of every family, in order to betray their secrets to Calvin, whose punishments were always as summary as they were unjust. Though Gibbon says, speaking of his murder of the Spaniard, 'I am more deeply scandalized at the single execution of Servetus, than at the hecatombs which have blazed at auto-da-fès in Spain and Portugal.'"

"Hoot! Sar," interrupted Colonel Clavering, "what is it ye bring forward agin Colvin, a pack of ootlandish names that I naver heered tell on; ond thin o' the top o' them ye steck Eddard Gubbon, the anfidel, not to say atheist, as a croon."

"Well, if you don't like the authorities I have already cited," said my uncle, "you can apply to Dr. Spalding, and Erasmus, for your friend's character."

"Ot all evants ye canna deny, that we owe the Raformation to him, Sar."

"But, indeed I do deny it; for what is called our Reformation, we owe to two almost equally bad men, Harry the Eighth, and his worthy bishop and coadjutor, Cranmer; and even the high church Protestants of his own day refused Calvin the title of demagogue which they gave to Christ, and Luther. Izchirner,

in his fanatical adulation, profanely calls our Saviour, Luther the First, but looks upon John of Noyon (as he calls Calvin) as 'an usurper who made use of the people to crown himself.' The Reformation had been already effected by the agency of Farel and Fremont (before Calvin's arrival), and its course had been marked as elsewhere by pillage of the churches, seizure of church property, and destruction of works of art, by robbery, sacrilege, and massacre. And you might, as Dr. Spalding remarks, 'have traced it by its effects, as you could have traced the march of an army of the Huns in the fifth century;' but my chief quarrel with Calvin is: his master heresy, of having presumed to graft Fatalism upon Christianity, and by so doing endeavoured to mildew the sacred and universal balm of the atonement, by the rank blasphemy of predestination. However," concluded my uncle, "if you would value it (which I assure you I do not), I shall be happy to give you a copy of the original edition, published in 1554 (the year after Servetus's execution) of Calvin's famous, or rather infamous work, "De Hereticis Puniendis." I picked it up many years ago in a curiosity-shop, at Geneva, with its original old black embossed leather binding; and what may enhance its attractions to you is, that it was a present from Calvin to his valet, or at least his servant, Claude Petit Jean, as his master has written with his own wicked old hand in the fly-leaf."

"Eh, I should indeed fale prood o' possessing aine of John Colvin's aine bookes that hod been in his

aine sacred hond; but unfortunately I dinna rade Latin, Sar."

"So much the better, for then it can do you no harm, so I'll give it you," said my uncle with a laugh, for fearing in his honest abhorrence of Calvin, that he had said something to hurt his (evidently very ignorant) disciple's feelings, he could not bear to dismiss him without trying in some way or other to make his parting feeling one rather of pleasure than of pain.

"Here it is," said he, stooping down, and drawing forth the ponderous old *tome*, "and I wish no poor sinner, whether heretic or orthodox, a greater punishment than to read it."

"I'm very much obleeged to your axcellency," cried the Calvinistic Colonel, clutching the gloomy-looking prize with a sort of grim enthusiasm, "ond I hove the honour of weeshing ye a goode day; ond I hop whan ye come oop to Fort Goliah, ye'll find the fortifications to your weesh."

"If I remember rightly, Colonel Clavering, you don't patronize French any more than Latin?" said my uncle, as the gaunt figure of the former strode towards the door.

"Na, I dinna ken ony of tham Popish tongues."

"Otherwise I would have asked you to come down to-night, as the Margravine of Anspach, with Monsieur de la Tour d'Auvergne, are going to give us some scenes from 'Tartufe.'"

"Eh!" cried Clavering, looking as aghast as if

the infernal regions had suddenly yawned before him, and Calvin himself had been stretching out his arms to receive him, "yar axcellency forgets that eet is contraire to my pranciples to see stage plays."

"Oh, I beg pardon," said my uncle, maliciously, "perhaps, then, Mrs. Clavering would like to come."

"The deil forbad; I dinna thenk (the Laird be praised) she's aver as much as heered the name of a stage play."

"I understand," said my uncle,

> "'S'il faut qu'avec elle on joue au corbillon,
> Et qu'on vient à lui dire à son tour: qu'y met-on?
> Je veux qu'elle réponde; une tarte à la crême;
> Et un mot, qu'elle soit d'une ignorance extrême.'"

"If yer axcellency is talling me ony diractions aboot the fort, parchops you'll have the gudeness to repate them in Anglish."

"I have only this to say about the fort, Colonel Clavering, that if circumstances should compel me next Sunday to send you any further orders, they *must* be obeyed, or I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of reporting you at the Horse Guards, for I cannot allow you again to jeopard some thousands of the lives of his Majesty's subjects with impunity. I have passed over your conduct once, but don't reckon too much upon my folly, or you will find yourself mistaken, for I am something after the fashion of my

Lord Butler of Weston, in the time of William III, who was said to have been of exceeding good sense, though he seldom shewed it."

"Eh, ond God's commandments, Sir."

"I should, I hope, be the last to ask any one to infringe them," said my uncle. "And when, in all the Scriptures, you can point out to me one commandment that says, 'Thou shalt not do thy duty on the Sabbath,' or even one line in the Old or New Testament, which could be construed into its being wrong to do what is right of a Sunday, (unless, indeed, you choose to reject our Saviour's answer, and build your faith upon the Sadducees' query of 'Whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath;') when you can do this, but not till then, I shall think it my duty to let the enemy invade us on the Sabbath without resistance, or defence. Meanwhile, my dear Colonel Clavering, I will recommend for your consideration that passage of Thomas à Kempis, wherein he says: 'Blessed is that simplicity which leaveth the difficult ways of disputes, and goeth on in the plain and sure path of God's commandments.'"

Mr. Waltham now entering with some foolscap official document that he had been inditing, Colonel Clavering bood himself out of the room, muttering:

"Weel, weel, the Laird lighten yer darkness; for I believe if ye could see the right way, ye'd gang it."

"It will do very well," said my uncle, signing the paper he had just perused, and returning it to Mr. Waltham, who left the room with it.

"How wretched poor Waltham looks, even more miserable than the Calvinistic Colonel, who has nothing but fire and brimstone, and eternal punishment, in his head from morning till night," said Belzoni.

"Well, so I've remarked," replied my uncle, "ever since he returned from Fort Goliah this morning; I wonder whether Clavering could have bitten him: he seems quite rabid enough to have done so; I asked Waltham several times if anything was the matter, and he said no."

"Oh, that's not true," cried I, forgetting, in my zeal to have the deficit of the £50 made good, that he particularly desired my uncle might not be made acquainted with its loss.

"Why, Mirry," said the latter, "you are becoming a perfect Solomon, you seem to know everything, so pray have the goodness to tell us what is the cause of poor Waltham's suddenly having the Lamentations of Jeremiah tatooed all over his face, when every one else in the house is full of private theatricals and merry-making."

"Oh! but I wasn't to tell *you*, above all people," said I, looking my Uncle steadily in the face, as much as to say, do press me, and then I must tell you, for with a degree of sense far beyond my years,

I considered fifty pounds cheap at any amount of anger, if Mrs. Waltham would be placed in such distress by its loss.

"Well, if he has been doing wrong, or what I should think wrong, don't tell me," said my Uncle; "for I hate tell-tales, and indeed, child, you were wrong to hint at anything that can't, or ought not to be told, for that is almost as bad a breach of trust as telling it; indeed worse in one respect, as it leaves people to imagine all sorts of things."

"But he hasn't been doing wrong, or I shouldn't have told it."

"What makes him look so miserable, then?"

"He has been very unfortunate."

"Ah! my dear Miss Mirry," said Belzoni, bitterly, "when you grow a little older, the world will soon teach you, that being unfortunate is the greatest wrong that any one can be guilty of."

"If he has been only unfortunate, you ought to tell me, Mirry, for I might be of use to him."

"But he's afraid you'd be so very angry with him for his carelessness."

"Hang it! the puppy has not been losing or mislaying any of my papers, I hope?" said my Uncle.

"No, not your papers, but—"

"But what? out with it, since you have begun to tell."

"Will you promise not to be angry with poor Mr. Waltham though, if I tell you? for indeed it was

me his back, it would never have happened if he would have helped it, so will you promise?"

"No, I never promise without knowing what I promise," interrupted my Uncle.

"Well, if you do scold him, will you promise to help him? you can do that."

"I never saw such a little Jew in my life," laughed my Uncle. "well, come, I suppose I must do that, or I shall never get at this mighty secret, that is, provided it is in my power to do so, for I am no conjuror, beyond the cards, and young gentlemen, like young ladies, have sometimes a strange hankering after impossibilities, and if he happens to want a squadron fitted out for the lunar regions, in quest of his lost wits, or to put in a claim for the reversion of some particular star, it would be quite impossible for me to assist him."

"Oh no! it's much easier than all that," said I, laughing, and I then related my meeting with Mr. Waltham on the stairs in the morning, his saying he did not know what his mother would do for the want of his fifty pounds, and our fruitless search for it on the ramparts.

"The careless puppy," said my Uncle, taking a pinch of snuff at railroad speed, and shutting down his snuff-box with great energy, as if to show how the fifty pounds ought to have been secured, and then it couldn't have blown away; "it's very odd there is no such thing as putting order, or business-like habits into

some people's heads, it's because he's so rich, I suppose, that he must go and convert fifty-pound notes forsooth into kites, or balloons upon the ramparts, whereas if he had taken his money down to the bank first, and sent it off to his mother, it could not have blown out of his pocket-book into the sea, which is of course what it has done; one way of making oceans of money, certainly. I have no toleration for such idiotic carelessness, none whatever!" and my Uncle got up, walked up and down, and thrust his hands into both his pockets, as if to assure his money that he would never be guilty of such unpardonable neglect towards it.

"Perhaps," suggested Belzoni, "my dear Sir George, you told him to go directly to Colonel Clavering's, and that that was the reason he did not take time to go to the bank with the money first, as you know the town is quite in a contrary direction to Fort Goliah?"

"Ah! may be so," said my Uncle, stopping suddenly short, and pulling his under-lip; "then at that rate I'm in some measure the cause of this piece of foolery; at all events, his poor mother and sister must not be let to suffer for it; and yet, I should like to punish the puppy, too." (I'm sure he would, he was so fond of punishing, and making people miserable!) And in order to do so, he walked over to a despatch-box that was on a chair in the window, and unlocking it with a key attached to his watch-chain, took out a leash of bank-notes.

"Tut, tut—how provoking!" said he, examining them; "not a £50 note amongst them; only £10 and £20; and I don't like to send out for it, for fear that fellow, Waltham, should hear of it."

Belzoni mechanically put his hand into his bosom, and half drew forth a pocket-book, which he as hastily thrust back, and suddenly starting up, held out his hand, and said:

"Give me those notes, and I'll soon get them changed into one."

"Oh, thank you, my dear Belzoni; how very kind of you! I'm sure it's more than the fellow deserves."

During Belzoni's absence, my uncle employed the time in endeavouring to impress upon Grace and me the dreadful consequences of carelessness in all things, but more especially in money matters; and as he said so, we were quite willing to believe that such is the case, though I think he failed in practically illustrating this to us on that occasion, notwithstanding that he took the greatest pains to assure us, that had it not been for the sake of the poor women, he would have let that fellow, Waltham, starve in a jail, as he deserved to do, for his unpardonable carelessness; and when Belzoni returned, my uncle added, addressing me specially, and getting up a frown, by which he endeavoured to assume as great a degree of formidable ferocity as may be seen any day for asking, in that magnificent mezzotinto portrait of the Great Mogul, on the wrapper of our English playing-cards. He said, as he placed the £50 note on the floor, be-

tween the double-doors of the library and the study, in which no one had been, since Mr. Waltham had left it for his own office, on the other side of the lawn, in the morning,

"Now, Mirry, go and pick that up, that there may be a grain of truth in the lie you are going to tell—so you see there is no end to the evil consequences entailed by carelessness—and then take it to that careless puppy, Waltham, and say you picked it up. Mind you don't say you found it, for you did not find it, as you saw me put it there; but tell him you picked it up between the two doors, and that he had better send it off to his mother immediately, before it goes out fishing with the other note; but take care you don't give him an idea that I know anything of his abominable carelessness, or I should be obliged to dismiss him; for I should never do any good with those fellows, if I did not make them afraid of me."

"Then I fear you never will do any good with them, at that rate," said Belzoni, smiling.

"And I'm sure you never will with me," said I, climbing up upon a chair, in order to throw my arms about his neck, and kiss his darling head; "for I never shall be afraid of you."

"You are an impudent little puppy," said he, kissing me, and putting me down, "not to treat your grand-uncle, and a Governor to boot, with more respect; and if I don't see something wonderful to-night

from a certain pair of little red boots with gold spurs, that some one (I think it must have been your albatross, Belzoni) told me about, I shall have to send it to Colonel Clavering, next Sunday morning, to get the black-hole ready at Fort Goliah."

"Ah!" laughed Belzoni, "and if he has any gallantry in him—though that, I suppose, would be against his principles—he may serenade you with that verse from the 'Song of Solomon,' which says, 'I'm black, but comely.'"

Mademoiselle here sent to say, that it was six o'clock; and she wanted me to come to tea, and then to go and lie down. I told Grace to say I would come directly; and once more kissing my uncle and Belzoni, I rushed through the hall, and down the steps, across the lawn, as fast as I could run, till I reached Mr. Waltham's office. I found him with his elbows on the table, and his face buried in his handkerchief. Heaven forgive me! but as I was the bearer of good tidings, I thought I was entitled to the recompense of a sorry joke; so I put on a most dismal face, as I stood at the door. He looked round, and, hastily wiping his eyes, said:

"Thank you, my dear Miss Miriam; I knew you would not be able to find it."

"And why, pray," said I, advancing on tiptoe with my hands behind my back, "should I not be able to find it?"

"Oh, I, of course, only meant that no one could find

it, or I'm sure you've done all you could, and I'm very much obliged to you."

"Well, if you are so very much obliged to me for *not* finding it, I suppose you won't be at all obliged to me *for* finding it; which is lucky, as I can't stay to be thanked; so there it is," said I, laying it down on the table, and running back to the door.

"My dear Miss Miriam, is it possible? Where did you find it?" said he, clasping his hands, while his eyes sparkled with delight.

"Oh, I can't stay now, I'm in a great hurry," said I; "it was not on the ramparts though; I picked it up between the double doors of the library and study; pray send it off to your mother directly, for fear you should lose it again;" and so saying, I made him a military salute, *à la cracovienne*, knocked my heels together, though I had no spurs on, and vanished, before he had time to say another word. When I got up stairs, I complained of a very bad headache; so Mademoiselle de Guilleragues would not let me have any tea, but gave me some *eau de fleur d'oranger* in water, and sent me to bed, that I might sleep off my headache against the important events of the evening. I was soon asleep; and, after a terrible night-mare, wherein I thought Colonel Clavering, mounted upon a huge bat, with fiery wings, upon which were inserted, *de hereticis puniendis*, carried me off hither, thither, up, down, to the right first, then to the left, and then all round about, for he did not seem very

well to know where he was going, I was eventually flung off upon a cloud, cool and pleasant withal, where I beheld Lady Laura O'Shindy sitting—like "Rule Britannia"—explaining to a set of starving wretches the excellencies of universal philanthropy; and how pernicious it was to relieve individual distress, while Dermot (too dazzling for mortal eyes to behold, in a livery of one solid emerald, studded with stars, the celestial climax, in fact, of his earthly field of buttercups) was holding a large toadstool over her head, with one hand to screen her complexion from the sun, (supposed to be lurking about that neighbourhood on the look out for a glimpse of it) while with the other, he contrived to offer, with all the dexterity of a heavenly tay boy,* a silver cloud full of ethereal refreshments—such as *clair de lune gazeuse*—and vapour sandwiches, which Lady Laura discussed at the same time, with the elevating principle, and universal benevolence; yet, strange to say, the poor starving wretches, by whom she was surrounded, did not seem to grow a bit the fatter upon the goodness of *her* appetite and philosophical principles; till suddenly I saw a universal gladness pervade, like a a burst of sunshine, the whole group, who began to scramble for sheafs of corn, amphorii of wine, and nice warm fleecy clouds, in which they wrapped themselves, and clapped their hands rejoicing; when,

* There is a tract published entitled "The Heavenly Footman," then why not "The Heavenly Tay boy?"

upon looking up far into a higher and brighter heaven, I beheld my Uncle Paulett, silent and still, with his Great Mogul face on, showering down all these things. I did not know a line of Milton then, and don't know many now, for I don't admire him, or if I had, it is probable that even in a dream, I might have said to the angels:

> "There entertain him, all the saints above,
> In solemn troops and sweet societies,
> That sing—and singing in their glory move—
> And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

But even in youth, one can't dream always, so Nelly just at this juncture awoke me; and although a reality, and a most substantial one, I must do her the justice to say, that she looked big and bright as a harvest moon; when she announced to me that it was tin o'clock, and time to put on my "bootsh and schpursh; for if iver any one rode de foremosht horshe, it wash I, that wud do it that night."

CHAPTER II.

THOUGH Nelly awoke me *à-propos de bottes*, I was not to don my Hungarian dress till I reached the little dressing-room of the theatre. It was between the acts when I went down with Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, or rather "Tartufe" was just over, and the Margravine having, of course, received as much applause as if she had been Mademoiselles Mars and Duchênois in one, had returned to the stage, which was also the state box, and judging from her appearance it would certainly seem that it was in vain "Tartufe" had said to her:

"Cachez ces appas que je ne saurais voir."

As she was really more *décolletée* than ever, I suppose on the principle of having no concealments from our friends; or, perhaps, from a kind of consideration for the little people of ———, whom she

might think would like to see as much as possible of so great a personage. It must be confessed that "British females" in the War used to make most terrible displays; but it may be presumed that it was only as a set-off to Napoleon's *chère à canon!* Be this as it might, it is no wonder that the "British grenadiers" are considered the bravest men in the world, since they never quailed before either; and of the two, I should think the English veteran petticoat battalion must have been the most formidable.

I myself prefer the plan of the ancients to these public displays; the former had temples for their antiquities, where everything curious in nature and art was arranged, and in a measure concealed, though we learn from Pliny that these poor people were unacquainted with the modern art of preserving animal substances. Suetonius indeed says that the Emperor Augustus had a collection of natural curiosities in his palace, though private collections were then unknown. So far, on the present occasion, thanks to the Margravine, Lady Laura O'Shindy, the Miss Cookes and Abrahams, my uncle resembled the Emperor Augustus; and could Theophrastus, Aristotle, and Apuleius, only have waited patiently till

> "Time, always delighted to dig and to delve,
> Had scooped out the year eighteen hundred and twelve,"

they might have spared themselves that infinity of

trouble and danger which they underwent in the collection and pursuit of natural curiosities, and have found them all ready collected to their hands, and in a high state of preservation. It seems that my aunts and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had had a violent dispute, in which however, with my uncle's assistance, the latter had carried the day. The matter at issue was this: my aunts, with their usual good taste and judgment, had wished my imitations to be given *pro bono* on the stage, merely omitting the stuttering Brigade-Major, and Lady Laura (the latter, by the bye, being my *chef-d'œuvre*).

The two aides-de-camp being young and handsome, with nothing ridiculous beyond a little affectation, which is always so, were to remain in the programme. But Mademoiselle, who knew the world thoroughly, and therefore also knew, that although one ought no more to judge of a person's whole nature by his conduct on any one particular occasion than one ought to decide upon the climate of a country from having only for one hour inhaled its temperature, yet is it on such data that the equitable world in its perspicuity always does decide; and she had no idea of my sowing hosts of future enemies perhaps, merely for the sake of gratifying one of my aunt's many caprices. It was therefore at length decided that this exhibition should be strictly private, and not take place till the next morning, when they and the Margravine were *en petit comité*. Wise Mademoiselle de Guilleragues! well did

she know that time, that greatest of all usurers, invariably takes from us more renown than he ever has lent us; but what she did not know, nor could not anticipate, was how my Aunt Marley in future years never ceased upbraiding me with that unlucky *cracovienne*, and kindly deploring to the whole world, especially to the male portion of it, who were silly enough to want to marry me, the terrible boldness and *àplomb* of a girl of nine years old, who could dance on a public stage; for into such was this poor little theatre, made to contain at most a hundred-and-twenty persons, converted by the magic of wilful misrepresentation.

The play being over, the stage was preparing with all the dilatory dispatch of private theatricals (or public ones in the House of Commons) for Fiametta's bolero; and therefore to avoid all suspicion, as like the "onion atoms" in Sydney Smith's salad, I was "unsuspected to animate the whole," it was deemed expedient that Grace and I should appear in the stage-box, and only leave it as if wishing its occupants good night; this being, as I before said, also the state-box, it was fitted up with a great deal of boudoir luxury, including plenty of looking-glasses for my aunts, so that they might (at least in public) indulge in pleasing reflections.

The Margravine, her *dame de compagnie*, the Dukes of Brunswick and Bouillon, Lady Paulett, my aunts, my uncle, his two aides-de-camp, and two German ones of the Duke of Brunswick's, at the back of the

box, completely filled it, while opposite, in grim array, sat the Cookes and Abrahams, and Lady Laura O'Shindy, with her tay boy standing behind her chair; for like Madame Duval with Monsieur Dubois in "Evelina" she "never went nowhere without him." And indeed it was part of the religious persuasion of the ——ites to believe that had Lady Laura been going to a ball or dinner at Carlton House, she would have told "Sam," or whoever her tay boy might have been for the time being (Dermot as yet not having taken office), "to be sure and ask if he and the umbrella could be of any use;" so that the jibes, jests, and affronts which poor Sam canvassed by this means, would incur too great an expenditure of time and paper to relate. Suffice it to say that he devoted the whole of his energies to eating and drinking, and had a curious and unprecedented knack of sleeping at all sorts of extraordinary times, and in all sorts of curious places, without however losing his perpendicular: for he could do his sleeping quite as well standing, walking, or masticating, as he could sitting down or reclining; and as when sleep overtook him in strange nooks and corners, it was at once difficult to find and to catch him, it was therefore supposed to be on that account that Lady Laura never lost sight of him, but always had him "dangling like some rare carcanet" about her person; though truth compels me to confess that he was not quite so ornamental, as he was exceedingly obese, dark, and shiny; in short very like a hippo-

potamus in figure and face, except that, instead of his own skin, he wore Lady Laura's field of buttercups livery, the yellow plush inexpressibles of which having unfortunately been made for his much taller predecessor, instead of confining themselves to their legitimate sphere—the knees—made themselves ridiculous (as all do who try to go beyond it) by hovering with the most unprincipled laxity about the calves, which being of a modest and retiring nature gave them no encouragement, but on the contrary a *flat* denial.

Now it so happened that on this eventful evening, "Sam's" slumbers were doomed to be cruelly disturbed by Lady Laura's wit, at least by her wit according to Pope, who asserts that, "a wit's a feather," at which rate she, who had never been guilty of wit before, now sported two wits in the shape of two feathers, one white, the bridal plumage of the ostrich; the other black, no doubt its widow's cap. One of these feathers drooped to the left, and the other to the right, so that Lady Laura was like that peculiar Indian people whose shadows fall both ways; and had it been only the shadows, as there were no Peter Schlemihls present, they might have fallen, and lain where they fell; but in sleep, strange notions come into people's heads, and "Sam," who had hitherto held on behind his mistress's chair, and slept through, or rather in spite of, all obstacles, was suddenly roused by that A B C of chivalry, the spirit of self-defence; for Lady Laura, in explaining to the eldest Miss Cooke the ele-

vating principle, used so much gesticulation that with the white feather she tickled Miss Cooke's moustache, while with the black one she had the misfortune to exasperate Sam's nose. I say misfortune, for that young gentleman not being wide awake, thought that some gigantic moth had mistaken his very flaming nose for the kitchen candle, and rushed incontinently into it; and he so resented the outrage, that raising his clenched fist, he aimed such a wide-of-the-mark blow, that it fell like a sledge-hammer upon poor Lady Laura's long, interminable, and lance-like nose, from which a crimson tide instantly flowed.

Being opposite, we had a perfect view of the whole scene; while Lord Frederick (who amid much ill-suppressed laughter, was dispatched to inquire after Lady Laura) observed that he should give Sam half-a-guinea for having performed a miracle, as it was the first time Lady Laura's *claret* had ever been made to flow; and my Aunt Bell, who, *en désespoir de cause*, had taken to quizzing Captain Dapperwit about the eldest Miss Cooke, asked him why he did not run over to inquire after the "hair-breadth 'scape" of her moustache.

"At all events, there is one comfort," said he, "in this accident; it won't be the *cause* of her having a *hare*-lip."

"Ha! ha! ha! Well, when is it to be, Dapperwit?" laughed my uncle; "and which is it to be?"

ı! ha! ha! The man-cook, I certainly think,
be apt to rule the roast," said my uncle.
ıd," said Lord Frederick, who now returned
favourable *bulletin* of Lady Laura's nose, laying
ıd upon Dapperwit's shoulder, "I'm afraid,
n them both, they'd spoil this broth of a

engthe curtain rose, and Fiametta, really beau-
a gem from some fairy's cabinet, her exquisite
ıd face (above her pink satin dress, with its
lace *basquinas*) peeping out of a black lace
a, which she quickly flung aside, looked like a
ose-bud visibly expanding. The first crisp
gs of her castanets seemed to carry off the
tion of the whole house, while Philip Vavasour
Byronising in the wing, apparently undecided
to admire most, Fiametta or himself.
he very first notes of the fandango, we were
ned out of the box; and Mademoiselle de
agnes hurried us along the passage, across the

could dance before so many. In vain Angelot clasped his hands, and "Est-il possible'd?" and Mademoiselle threatened me with my aunt's displeasure. The bolero was just over.

"Look," said Mademoiselle, pointing to the stage-box, "how pale and anxious Sir George looks; and you are going to be so unkind, so ungrateful, as to disappoint him, and indeed to disgrace him, after the way he loves you, and all he has done for you; and he is only to give you masters, and everything else, to show the world that he is wasting his money upon a little dunce, who will not, or cannot, dance one dance to oblige him; while night after night, Miss Fiametta, for whom he does comparatively nothing, has the goodness to dance for him and his guests as long as he pleases. Go—I am ashamed of you. I thought you had a good heart, but I see I was mistaken. Poor Sir George! it's for *him* that I am sorry."

Every syllable of this harangue was gradually taking effect; and at its conclusion, I raised my eyes to the stage-box, and truly, as Mademoiselle had said, my uncle *was* looking pale and nervously anxious towards the wing where we were standing, and where he probably had seen all that passed. This was quite enough. I threw my arms round Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, and with a concluding sob, assured her that I would dance the cracovienne even better than I had done in the morning.

"Enfin, je respire!" said Angelot, who had been keeping up an adagio accompaniment of threats to assassinate his Cremona, and suicide himself, as I was likely to disgrace them both.

What, perhaps, confirmed me in my resolution was, that, during the concluding plaudits for the bolero, Fiametta, who had that moment run off the stage, passed by with Philip Vavasour, who was in waiting to cover her with a shawl, just as the orchestra began playing the cracovienne; and Mademoiselle snatched the cloak that concealed my dress from my shoulders.

"*You* going to dance, Mirry!" laughed Fiametta, eyeing me from head to foot.

"What presumption," sneered Philip, flinging me over his shoulder, as he passed on, the most Lara-like piece of optical blighting he could command at so short a notice.

"Oh, let us make haste round to see the fun," said Fiametta.

I let the orchestra repeat the air, but I was not hesitating, as Angelot and Mademoiselle feared—I was but waiting till Fiametta and her companion were seated in the stage-box; and then, at the repetition of the first bar of the cracovienne, I bounded on the stage, to use Angelot's words, "as if my feet had been of down, with diamond wings to them." The universal plaudits which ran round the house, were echoed with heartfelt cordiality behind the

scene. I not only made my salute to the audience in general, but favoured Fiametta and her companion with one in particular.

My dear Marley might well have been surprised though she need not have expressed that surprise so long and so wildly at the *àplomb* and the expression with which I bowed, for no one could be half so much surprised at it as I was myself: but then, to be sure, I was urged on by two very potent spurs—my dear, kind uncle's look of triumph and delight, and the mighty Philip's very undignified look of wonder and admiration.

There were parts for the cracovienne were rather exhausting, but in the first triumph, I mean public triumph of one's life, there is no room for fatigue, *that* is for the heavy baggage of disappointment, and after all I was finely recalled. Those were not the days of bouquets, but Angelo had prepared a diadem of green and gold laurel, which, removing my Hungarian cap, he dressed as a rather masculine figure of Victory, placed upon my head: and I was not sorry at length to escape from my honours, for I was so tired that I could not get as far as the green-room, *alias* dressing-room, but humble-room, but flung myself upon the first seat behind the scenes, whither the Barons Doodlezac and Von Schwellingwine also came, nearly suffocating me with compliments and tobacco: and in the way of praise I even then, but most decidedly now, prefer the former. Doodlezac pryed inquisitorially into my cap

and feather, while Schwillingwine investigated minutely into my boots to try and discover where the art was niched, and from whence the success had come; for as their compatriot Jean Paul Richter truly says: "The Germans, like metaphysicians, wish to know everything from the bottom, accurately, in large octavo, with no excess of conciseness, and with a few citations. They rig out an epigram with a preface, and a love-madrigal with a table of contents. They determine the course of a zephyr by a sea-compass, and the heart of a girl by conic sections. Like merchants, they mark everything with capitals, and prove everything like jurists. The membranes of their brains are living memorandum books, their legs are secret metewands and pedometers. They cut asunder the veil of the Nine Muses, and measure the hearts of these girls with compasses, and their heads with a guage." While Doodlezac and Schwillingwine were doing the same by me, and likewise sounding Angelot with a plummet, which at all events had plenty of lead in it, as to—

"Gomment il était bossible que je navait abbrit cetta tanse assez pien pour tanser devant la gompanie debbuis le matin?" Schwillingwine adding:

"Gar moi, j'étais neuf mois dans un maître de tanse à Vienne, et je ne hai jamais peut l'abbrendre."

"C'est clair," said Angelot, laughing, "être neuf mois incarceré dans un maître de danse! en effet on aura de la peine à savoir sur quel pied danser."

Here Master Philip Vavasour made his appearance, leisurely looking to the right, and to the left, as if he had expected to find every body gone, and not doing so, seemed unlike Sam, as though

"Slumber soothed not, pleasure could not please!"

However, notwithstanding the scandalous idleness and incapacity of these two blessings of all-work, he contrived to convey himself without their assistance to the side of the chair upon which I was sitting; and Doodlezac and Schwillingwine being at the time deeply engaged in impressing upon Angelot that great undisputed truism, of the muscles being more pliant in youth than in age, he bent down, and said:

"Really, Miriam, you looked exceedingly pretty, and danced that Hungarian dance most beautifully!" and in order to take his affidavit of it, as it were, there being no book at hand, he kissed me.

Few young ladies of my age could have looked or felt more insulted; he had never done so before, as from the difference between our ages he might have done, so I now felt all the impertinence of the patronage contained in this proceeding; therefore, without a moment's hesitation or reflection, I gave him a slap in the face for his pains, merely echoing in the facsimile of his own supercilious sneer of while ago—"What presumption!" And it coming "twangingly off," I mean the slap, not the kiss, Doodlezac and Schwillingwine turned suddenly round, and upon seeing the rue-

ful face of this "hero of a thousand attitudes," burst into a stentorian fit of laughter, while Master Philip Vavasour slunk away, muttering something about his being "the first of his family that had ever been so insulted."

"Ha! ha! ha! no, your family are generally first to insult and to injure," burst from a husky voice, which seemed to come from the rafters amid the machinery.

"Ha!" cried Philip, turning round and stopping suddenly, livid with rage, as he looked up, set his teeth, and clenched his threatening hand. "Who dares to insult *my family?* I will tear his tongue from his mouth before he shall do it again."

There are few things perhaps more ludicrous, and at the same time more painful, than to see a pigmy struggling and tottering under the colossal armour of pride, which only crushes him without aiming at or warding off a single blow from his assailant. No answer being returned to his demand, he still stood looking up, his fine head thrown back, his dark eyes almost burnt out as it were with rage, and every muscle and fibre swollen and quivering from passion. When Mademoiselle de Guilleragues walked up to him, and laying one hand gently on his arm, while she pointed to the rafters with the other, said:

"My good young gentleman, there is no use in your standing there like Ajax defying the thunder,

for it is up there that the thunder and lightning of the theatre are kept!"

Stung still more by the quiet ridicule of this speech, he broke from her, grasping his hair on both sides as if he could have dashed down his own head as a gage to his invisible foe. Alarmed at his violence, which certainly dated from the blow I had given him, I followed and tried to overtake him, to ask his forgiveness, but he was gone.

"What is the matter with Philip?" asked I.

"Pride, or if you like it better, the Lucifer-fever."

"I'm so glad—not glad that he has got a fever, but glad it was not I who made him angry."

"No, it was the laugh of the two barons, the having witnesses, in fact, to an affront, though only offered by a child; and above all, the little bit of truth that dropped down to him as it were out of the clouds. On a bien raison de dire," concluded Mademoiselle, "que ce n'est que la vérité qui blesse."

Here Lord Frederick came to say, that all the world, as he phrased it, requested the honour of my company to supper.

But a public favourite may be allowed to give herself airs, so I sent back word that I was too tired; but begged of Lord Frederick to ask my uncle just to come to the dining-room door, as I wanted to kiss him before I went to bed; he did so, and the real triumph of the evening to me, was when he caught

p in his arms, and called me his own darling Red Boots, (a pet name that I retained through a year); and the real pleasure of the evening when he invited Grace, Pomba, and me, to fast with him and Fido the next morning.

CHAPTER III.

"THERE is no greater wisdom," observes Lord Bacon, "than well to time the beginnings and onsets of things;" and it was for this reason that I consider Mademoiselle de Guilleragues never evinced more wisdom than upon the following morning, when presents began to pour in to me from all quarters, as if I had really been an opera-dancer. From the Duke of Brunswick I received a beautiful little enamel watch, representing on each side the head of a cherub, one dark, the other fair, with sapphire and pearl wings; the "Veillées du Château," "Adèle et Théodore," beautifully bound, and some half-dozen yards of the smallest possible Venetian chain, from the Duc de Bouillon; a splendid doll's-house from Lord Frederick; and an equally magnificent wax-doll from Captain Dapperwit; a turquoise heart and chain from Mr.

Waltham; an emerald bracelet from the Margravine (as I then thought), but which afterwards turned out to be a very fine, though by no means rare, specimen of coloured-glass; and though last, not least, as in heaviness it certainly out-weighed them all, a copy in boards of Lady Laura's last valuable novel, "The Philanthropic Poisoner;" and what no doubt enhanced the value of the gift was, that having been sent open, that is, unenveloped in paper, it contained several autographs of Sam's classic fingers; I call them classic, as they had evidently graduated in grease.

Well, as I said before, Mademoiselle never evinced more wisdom than on this occasion; for after she had cordially sympathized with my delight, admired all my presents, and made me not only divide them equally with Grace, but offer her her choice of them; and Grace, always amiable and forbearing, took good care not to select the little angels keeping watch, with which she saw I was especially delighted.

"Now, why do you suppose you were sent all those pretty things, Miriam?" asked Mademoiselle.

"Oh," said I, with a *petit air de suffisance*, "because I danced so well."

"Ah! my dear child," said Mademoiselle, shaking her head, "ignorance is the foundation of all conceit, as your last speech has fully evinced; for if you reflected a moment, you would recollect that most of the persons who saw you dance last night, have seen all the finest dancers in Europe; therefore, it is not

to be supposed that they could see anything so very wonderful in the dancing of a little girl of your age, as to think it worthy of sending you such pretty things. It is not on account of your dancing that they have sent them."

"Then why is it?" asked I, with a strange fall-from-the-clouds sort of feeling, at finding that I was nothing more than an ordinary individual after all, though my ears had rung with *bravas* on the preceding night, and a fame *d'occasion* had crowned me with laurel: but it is precisely in proportion to their tinsel that such sham diadems of popular favour quickly tarnish and crumble into dust, leaving us no trace of their ephemeral existence, but the humiliating conviction of our own, and their insignificance.

"I'll tell you why: it is because you were a good girl, a doubly good girl: for you first took great pains to learn the cracovienne, in order to amuse your uncle and his guests: and next, though naturally timid and frightened at the idea of dancing before so many persons, you made a brave struggle to conquer your own fears and feelings in order not to disoblige and disappoint your dear good uncle; and that's the reason why people love you, and think you deserving of all these pretty things."

Somehow or other, without feeling at all in the same state of effervescence that I did when my dancing was applauded, I felt an intense glow of satisfaction at what Mademoiselle had just said, and

a vague, but strong notion, that even I had the power of being of some use in the world instead of only receiving as I had hitherto done; but I could, at the same time, think of no better way of accomplishing this, than by throwing my arms round Mademoiselle, and assuring her that I was quite ready to dance every night, even before more people, if the theatre would hold more.

"Non, ma petite," said she, "you shall never dance again on any theatre with my consent, for I don't like public exhibitions for young ladies; and I only wished or allowed you to dance last night, to prove that you were neither less willing nor less capable of obliging than your cousin; for to be willing to serve or oblige, without knowing how, is the great canker of most persons' good intentions. If a doctor gave you poison, instead of medicine, and then said he was very sorry, he had meant to cure you, but did not know Peruvian bark from prussic acid, and so administered the latter for the former, neither his regrets nor his ignorance would restore your life, or compensate to your friends for your loss; and the more I see of the world, the more I am convinced that ignorance, which always begets apathy, is the moral poison of society. How constantly do we hear—'Oh, that's that horrid Mr. Tomkins, who forged upon Mr. Simpkins.' 'No, on the contrary,' replies the auditor, 'it was Simpkins who forged upon Tomkins.' 'Ah, well,' says the first speaker, 'I know it was one or the other of them,'—

or, 'Or isn't there something against Mrs. So-and-So's character? didn't she go off with some man?' 'No, on the contrary, it was her husband who turned her out of the house to make way for his mistress; in short, who has done everything that's infamous.' 'Oh, well, I knew that there was something disreputable about them; and as they were separated, I of course thought it was her fault.' How often too, in a mixed society, do we hear a sweeping condemnation of a person's conduct, till some one, personally and intimately acquainted with the condemned, chooses to say: 'Surely you cannot be aware that such-and-such are the facts?' then comes the answer of: 'No, I was not; *that* quite alters the case;' in short, my dear children, as society is now constituted, calumnies are cut out, as soldiers' clothes are by the army tailors, that is wholesale, and with no regard whatever as to their fitness for the luckless individuals upon whom they are thrust. But what I mean by knowing how to be useful is, in fact, having *des connoissances contre les naufrages*, for many who are born in a palace may have to live in a desert, or die in a hovel, in which case mere accomplishments are of no use. Look at our *noblesse*, how magnanimously and bravely have they come down from the lap of luxury, to cheerfully and indefatigably breaking stones, for their daily bread, on the rugged highways, and still more rugged and desolate by-ways of life; oh, they have great hearts!" exclaimed Mademoiselle, her eyes filling with tears; "so great

that even that meanest of all things—poverty—becomes dignified and honourable in them, just as in the vast saloons of the Italian palaces, even the rags of a beggar look picturesque and poetical, from the grandeur and loftiness by which they are surrounded.

"After to-morrow, I intend to take you both, three times a-week, to get lessons from Mistress Stillingfleet in all that concerns household matters, even to cooking and preserving, and making broths and beverages properly for a sick room. If you happen to marry dukes, or *millionnaires*—which, however, are not overplentiful in the lottery of marriage—such knowledge will enable you to make your very splendour more sterling, by knowing how things ought to be, and not trusting entirely to money, or to servants; for though the former is omnipotent, yet the latter often contrive to play the d—l, and introduce discord and disappointment, as Lucifer did before them; and if, on the contrary, you are married to a man of only moderate fortune, such knowledge will double it—at least, in comfort and appearance; and if to a downrightly poor man, then the want of such knowledge becomes a positive vice, for, by disorder and bad management, you give to the wasp poverty the sting of the hornet. Economy, to deserve the name, should be like the springs of a watch, invisibly regulating the fair exterior; the moment it is made apparent in petty savings and deficiencies, without neatness and order, it becomes meanness, and not economy; for economy is the art of

making much out of little and scrupulous the art of making even much appear little and little still less.

"Besides, think of your [redacted]. I am very certain, if your husband loved you, he would like everything better from the idea that you were the main-spring of it; and if he were ill, I think he would get well all the sooner, from knowing that all he took was prepared by you. Any, even the most ordinary young lady, would feel very properly ashamed if, when grown up, she had not the least idea of the order of succession of the kings of her own country, or how to find out a place on the map: and yet, in my opinion, she ought to feel equally ashamed at not knowing the succession of bills of fare—that is, knowing when things are, and are not, in season, in order to be able to order dinner for every day in the year; and also, it is a lamentable piece of ignorance not to know whether things that come into the house are good or bad, or how they ought to be dressed or preserved. There are some, alas! many, houses so disgustingly ill appointed (and not from poverty either, though that would be no excuse), that they remind one of the old story of Beau Filigree, who married Miss Dulcibella Dieaway; and a friend of his asking a third party, who had dined with this couple the day before, what sort of *ménage* Filigree's was, the other replied:

"'Oh! it is a sort of house where everthing is sour but the vinegar; and the wife has become like a cow in everything but her breath!' meaning thereby, that

there was the bad of everything, and the good of nothing; just as some persons have the unlucky talent of imbibing all their country's defects, without one of the national virtues; for which reason you sometimes meet French people frivolous without being either graceful or agreeable; English people cold and stupid, without being either clean or sincere; Scotch persons cringing without being humble, and stingy without being thrifty; while the crowning horror of all, is the Hibernian, who with all the dirt, disorder, laziness, and braggadocio of his or her country, has not one particle of its wit, warm-heartedness, or generosity.

"I once knew an immensely rich Russian princess, whose money used actually to be shovelled out, without any regard to numerical barriers; and yet, though she kept four cooks, everything was so bad and so dirty, that there was no touching anything. I was at the same time acquainted with an English lady of very straitened means, but she was a real lady, as everything about her proclaimed, for there was a brilliancy of cleanliness and order surrounding her that amounted to luxury, and, by the vulgar and the superficial, were taken for such. Everything was good to a point of perfection—bread, butter, tea, cream,—and coffee! Such coffee! worthy of Mahomet, or Voltaire himself. Neither was she ever so vulgar, or so ungrateful, as to be ashamed of her poverty, and it would have been ingratitude, as it was the only thing that had not deserted her; therefore she was never annoyed at being found

at dinner with merely one *plat;* but then, to be sure, that one, thanks to her own knowledge of cookery, and the pains she had taken to instruct one of her only two servants that officiated as cook, was well-dressed and as well-served (for that is half the battle) as if it had been the production of a *cordon bleu*, and if only a *côtelette*, or a *salmi*, it was perfect. Then, too, nowhere could glass and plate be seen more brilliant, or linen more dazzlingly white than hers; and most truly has it been said, that cleanliness is the elegance of poverty—it might be added its only elegance, and therefore should never be neglected.

"But don't suppose, my dear children, that because as women I think it essential that you should be good, that is, ladylike housekeepers, and also know how to do plain work thoroughly and neatly; for not to do so, I look upon as great an omission in a woman's education as it would be in a man's not to know how to handle a sword, or load a gun, for those are their weapons; and as needles and scissors are our only ones, surely we ought to know how to use them; but as I was going to say, it is not upon that account that women should be ignorant of all else: on the contrary, they cannot have too much general and solid information, because general information will make them agreeable and useful companions to all classes and all ages; and solid information is a chart and compass that will prevent their splitting upon that most paltry of all rocks, pedantry; and, at the same

time will keep them clear of the quicksands of folly, vice, and vanity. And if you learn how to be of use to yourself and others, depend upon it, you will gain more love than by dancing boleros or cracoviennes."

"But why," said I, "don't they always send Fiametta presents when she dances?" for, like the rest of the world, I was more full of my own affairs than all Mademoiselle had been saying; for good seed, even more than bad, requires time to fructify, though when sown early it is sure to yield a harvest at last.

"Oh, because," said Mademoiselle, in answer to my question, "she dances every night."

"But why does she dance every night, if it is wrong, as you say, for girls to dance in public?"

There is nothing so difficult to answer as children's home thrusts, either in theology, or moral philosophy; and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, no doubt, not being able to reply to this last query of mine without uprooting some of the good seed she had been trying to sow, did not answer it, but instead, merely looked at her watch, and exclaimed:

"Ciel! we were to have breakfasted with Sir George at nine, and ma foi, it is now ten minutes past; vite, descendons!"

CHAPTER IV.

GRACE having taken charge of the large wax-doll in her silver-paper *négligée*, and Mademoiselle of the books, while I was hung in jewellery, like the image of a newly-decorated Madonna, Nelly was summoned to carry down the house; for my Uncle Paulett being an honorary member of the nursery and school-room clubs, we should have thought it high treason had any important donation been made to either without his being apprized of it; and, indeed, so well did he act his part of wonder, admiration, and delight, at every new accession to the realms, not of Troy, but toy, that we were for a long time under the firm conviction that he was quite as fond of playthings as we were, and thought it a great shame that when any were sent to us, there were not some also sent to him, and that it was only a part and parcel of his usual

unselfish kindness which prevented his accepting them when we offered him ours.

As for Nelly, ever since my last night's triumphs, she was in such a state of inflation, that I am very certain had that enterprising genius, Mr. Barnum, only been there to induce her to dispose of herself upon advantageous terms, and had tied one of my red Hungarian boots to her, as a sort of parachute, she would have soared away higher into the clouds than any balloon that has ever yet been known, or kite either, even in America. And when she now saw me "all covered wid jules and relics," as she called them, she went off into such a paroxysm of hand-clasping and turning up her eyes, that I think she really thought I was a "shaint," more especially when I issued a miraculous mandate, ordering her to take up the house and carry it down stairs.

"Och, den shure enough, afther Dermot's having had the imperrance to find hish way here, and me own child taking de concate out of dat stuck-up Missh, of Sur Josephsh's, and her cast-yer-nets, as she callsh dem, (she casht dem in throubled wathers lasht night, I'm tinking), I don't doubt but dere ish noting imposshible," muttered Nelly; and then began awkwardly trying to take the house cross-ways, instead of length-ways, so that of course it was (being a very large one) too broad for her arms to compass.

"Och, murder!" said she, desisting from her labours, "itsh Missh Bell dat I ought to shend for;

she's de only one dat makesh nothing of raishing de houshe at a momentsh notishe."

My uncle was delighted, as usual, with my presents, and suggested sundry alterations in the arrangements of the drawing-room furniture; for there was no shade of kindness unknown to, or unpractised by him, and he well understood the happy art of awarding the sympathy of importance to the trifles that interest children; to be sure, he never talked or wrote fine sentiments, and therefore realities were the only safety-valves he had for his exuberance of Faith, Hope, and Charity. After breakfast, he and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, from discussing the Margravine's acting, and the Germans then at ——, got to a comparative analysis of Germany, France, and England.

"Germany," said my uncle, "gives me always the idea, from the immense mass of vague, subtile, and yet withal misty, metaphysics that is floating about it, of the disembodied soul of some dead world, struggling in all directions to re-unite itself with the unigenous bonds of matter; and England, of a body without a soul, mechanically perfectionizing all its unspiritual wants; while France, with its exotic philosophy grafted upon its mercurial temperament, seems like a great myth in the world's phantom of the Graces doomed to the Mezentian punishment."

"I quite agree with you," said Mademoiselle; "for the fact is, Germany is the great emporium for the

raw material of thought, which is next highly and elaborately wrought in the brain-looms of France, and then retailed in England, where a little of the original dullness is restored to the tissue, which the English call solidity; and thus having put their own stamp upon the article, they take out a patent as profound thinkers."

"Perfectly true," said my uncle; "but so it must be, on the principle of division of labour. The universe is nothing more than the great manufactory of God's purposes; the workshop of the Eternal, in fact, where souls, through the manifold processes of different destinies, are hewn and moulded for exportation to other hemispheres; and of course, the same part of the machinery which sorts the rags, cannot hot-press and weave the fair sheet of paper. I only wish the system could be extended to individuals, as well as to nations; for I never read Wordsworth, for example, without wishing that he could get some one else to express his ideas (as indeed Lord Byron has kindly done for him in many instances), and then he would really be a great poet; but as it is, his finest thoughts are often marred by the rusty hinges of a badly-turned phrase. It would seem as if the sacred spark within us was ever yearning for the mystic Trinity in all things: mere thought in poetry does not satisfy without that harmony of expression which is to intellectual imagery what sunlight is to the material landscape—the halo that vivifies and gilds it into beauty. For Sweden-

borg is right when he asserts, that 'There are three apartments in the soul of man—the outer thought which the senses act on the external world is open in all men; the second, from which the light of intellect shines through the senses is open in greater or lesser degrees in most men; into the inmost shrine comes light directly from the spiritual world, shines through the transparent intellect, irradiates the senses, and sheds ethereal glory on all external things; according to the degree in which the veil of this sanctuary is removed, and the direction in which its rays are turned by temperament and education, men become prophets, poets, or artists.'"

"*A-propos* of prophets," said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; "what do you think of the prophecy of my compatriot, the Duc de Rohan, who said a hundred and twenty years ago, that 'England was a huge animal that will never die till it commits suicide.'"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed my uncle, "then I think she may take her place among the immortals at once; for though the English 'are not a moral people, and they know it,' as Lord Byron says, yet I think England does really possess that sort of take-care-of-number-one morality in too pre-eminent a degree ever to be guilty of the crime of suicide, unless indeed she should get an indigestion of wealth, and prefer death to abstinence. There is a prophecy, too, about Ireland, as old as the time of Tacitus, when it appears that a huge sea-monster was in the habit of haunting

its coast (called by the naturalists the *Tchetus Megacodensis*), and revolutionizing the sea to that degree that all the finny tribe became fish out of water, and emigrated in shoals to the dry land to get out of his way.* The prophecy runs that Ireland will never be at peace; that is, never have justice done her till this monster is destroyed; and goes on to say, that his destruction will not be accomplished till the industry of all nations shall pour into the land of the Saxon,† as that of the ancient world did into Persepolis, or else on the first day of the year 1900. So you see, like all prophecies, it has two epochs of egress given to it."

"It is very provoking," said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, "that prophecies seem a sort of rare fragile egg-shell porcelain, which Mamma Nature always puts by, and keeps for the benefit of her favourite child when it grows up to years of posterity."

"Mister Vavasour's compliments, Sir," said Morden, as he laid the letter-bag on the table, "and he should be glad to speak to you for a few minutes, if you are at leisure."

"I am, till eleven," replied my uncle, looking at

* This is evidently our "fat friend," the sea-serpent, whom I am inclined to think is no other than Job's Leviathan—the crowning miracle of creation, unique and eternal of his species; in short, the submarine Wandering Jew, whom, it would appear, from the galvanic charges of the small fry he lately ejected, keeps his own private electric telegraph.

† We are very near May, 1851. *Nous verrons.*

his watch, "and it's only a quarter past ten, so he may come in."

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues rose to depart, and asked if we should go too, but my uncle said we might remain, which I was very glad of, as I was in all the agonies of experimental philosophy, trying to make a gridiron, which I had transplanted from the kitchen to the drawing-room, fit on the chimney-piece, where I was trying in vain to make it do duty as an ornament; but even drawing-room chimney-pieces, it would seem, have the aristocratic spirit of exclusiveness, and resist interlopers from an inferior sphere. So this one was with much narrowness demonstrating at its every corner, that there was no room for the gridiron, while I was suffering almost as much as St. Lawrence from the fever I had got into in trying to force it upon the mantel-piece *nolens volens*, though Grace, who was a Conservative, espoused the cause of the latter, and entreated me to desist. As we were sitting in the embrasure of the window, with the doll's house before us, we could upon standing up see over the roof, but upon sitting down were to others perfectly invisible, which I was glad of, as I was rather anxious to know whether Philip in asking to see my uncle was coming to complain of the slap in the face I had given him the night before, as he had appeared so very angry after it.

"Good morning, my boy," said my uncle to him as he entered, putting out his hand to him without how-

ever taking his eyes off of a newspaper he had just opened till he added, "have you breakfasted?" when he laid down the paper.

"Yes, thank you, Sir; that is no—at least, I mean I don't want any breakfast."

My uncle looked at him half gravely over his spectacles, and said:

"Ah, well, you are on the right side of the gulf of want; for the things we don't want are always easier of attainment than those that we do."

"I—I want to speak to you, Sir."

"You have only to speak, I'm listening; but first sit down, and then we shall be upon more equal terms.

"I wish, Sir, if it is not inconvenient to you, that you would allow me to have your yacht to return to England before Lady Paulett goes next month."

"Why, are you uncomfortable here? I hope Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett—that is, I hope nothing has occurred to annoy you?"

"Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett have both been exceedingly kind to me, but—"

Notwithstanding the but, my uncle seemed to inhale new courage into his heart and lungs, and with a climacteric pinch of snuff appeared now equal to anything.

"But," continued Philip, "I was last night so grossly insulted that I cannot remain here."

It was now my turn to feel uncomfortable; I grew

very red. I looked at my right hand, the author of the blow; I had no dagger in it, but *faute de mieux* the gridiron fell from my paralyzed grasp on my white frock, where it lay like a black elephant skeleton amid the snows of Caucasus, while Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who was walking on the lawn, beckoned to Grace, who opened the window, and went to her.

"Insulted in my house! by whom pray?" said my uncle.

"Did I know by whom, I should have avenged the insult, Sir, and not have complained of it."

"But if you don't know the name of the offenders, you surely must know their appearance; describe them."

"I cannot, Sir; I did not see them."

"Why really," said my uncle, smiling, "I begin to think you must have been insulted like the Scotchman in James the Second's time, who, in going along the Strand, heard some one calling him a poor, beggarly, raw-boned Highlander, whereupon he hastily drew his dirk, but perceiving it was only a green parrot who had paid him this compliment, he bandaged up the scratch his pride had received by doubling his fist at the scurrilous bird, and saying, 'Gin ye wor a mon, as ye are green guse, I'd splat yer craw far ye wi' my dirk.'"

"No, Sir, it was no parrot that insulted me; it was some dastardly wretch from the rafters of the theatre, who, under the shelter of his ambush, dared

to tell me that my family were generally the first to injure and to insult."

"Nay, my dear boy," said my uncle, with a sigh, "don't begin by wincing so keenly under, and resenting so fiercely, this small modicum of truth, or I fear neither your strength, nor your valour, will suffice to cope with the still more stubborn truths you will have to grapple with as you go through the world; for your father left such a host of unavenged victims, that you must expect to meet with a phalanx of reversionary insults at every turn you take; but believe me, the less you exhume your father's vices, by resenting any allusions you may hear to them, the better; and the only effectual way in which you can plunge them into a merciful oblivion, is by effacing them with the virtues of his son."

"Sir!" cried Philip, gasping, and tearing off his cravat, as he started to his feet, "you forget that you are impugning my dead father's honour?"

"Tush, boy! your living father had no honour to impugn," cried my uncle, now roused into congenial passion: "have you no touch of human feeling in you beyond your low, cold, hollow pride? Were it love for your father, the feeling would be laudable and noble; for love is a warm, gushing, natural fountain, ever overflowing and fertilizing all within its reach; therefore were it love, you would have some touch of nature towards the poor, withered, blighted, trampled heart of your ill-fated mother. But no, you

have only pride! that ruthless tyrant, who carries the blazing torch of civil war into every mind that harbours it; making fratricides of all the other passions, circling with a wall of adamant the wide territory of affection, and inclosing it in an artificial atmosphere of reserve, with an imaginary sky of grandeur above it, towards the over-charged imagery of which it is ever soaring, remorselessly unconscious of all external things, *of all other selves*, as long as it can soar higher and higher in this ideal region, with an eye that never sleeps, and a wing that never tires, and clasp in its arms of visionary self-importance the universe, no matter though earthquakes and thunderbolts be the wild and demon music elicited from the crumbling destinies it uproots and shivers in its headlong course. And for what? often to leap prematurely into its own grave, or swell the fettered legions of insanity; for truly pride goeth before a fall, and rapid is the descent from its giddy and tottering eminence to the dark unfathomable gulf beneath. Oh! how the arch enemy of mankind must laugh when the column of pride catches the lightning's flash, as the clouds of fate are riven asunder, and for once out-blazes Heaven! but only as its own funeral pyre, and to add more ashes to the lowly city of the dead! Do not suppose that I am drawing an imaginary picture of the loathsome turpitude, the moral deformity, the reeking rankness, and the varnished villany, that national pride and luxury engender, and then let loose in legions of embodied

curses to jostle each other in the crowded thoroughfares of every city, and pine and perish in many a lonely hamlet; no, I speak of the dark, narrow, crooked bye-ways—the blind, vice-crammed alleys into which no ray from heaven ever penetrated—of one man's heart, and that man was your father! When I told you the other day, that he had left no brutality uninflicted, no outrage unheaped upon your mother, where till he ended his days in a mad-house from *delirium tremens*, brought on by a fit of intemperance, before he had recovered from a wound inflicted by the husband of a woman he had seduced—your only commentary, and it was at once christian-like and noble, was, 'that men would be men, and that wives, under any provocation, should never complain!'

"No, verily, for it is worse than useless. The law has taken good care to provide no redress for them, nor is it likely ever to be the *custos morum*, as long as the men who sit in high places to frame and to administer it are themselves profligate and immoral characters;* and as the law of public opinion is far more potent in our social code than any *lex scripta*, to hold the broad brand of infamy always at gallies' heat,

* What would this honest old English gentleman have thought of my Lord Brougham's great zeal, in a recent cruel case of a wife's seeking redress at the hands of the law, (poor silly creature!) to impress upon his hearers the "necessity of preventing women from obtaining divorces for cruelty and adultery." He would have said, no doubt, that the sentiment was worthy of the man.

ready to stamp certain species of delinquents for posterity, it is necessary to close the doors even of this tribunal of appeal to their victims, by a disgusting twaddle of spurious, because one-sided morality; which, by enacting an impost of dumbness on the oppressed, shrouds the oppressor in a dastardly, but impregnable panoply. But as honour is your watch-word, what think you of the nice, manly, and high-strung honour of a man, who, after having violated every duty, and left no sin unsinned towards his wife, in order to justify his own infamy, goes about defaming her (for there are no prejudices in society against such conduct, provided always that the husband's the aggressor,) and when asked if such is the case, why he does not resort to the two modes of redress which are always open to men,—pistols and Doctors'-Commons—nobly and chivalrically replies, 'that that's his affair,' and prefers at once pocketing and proclaiming his fabricated dishonour. Ay! hide your face in your hands, groan in the very innermost coils of your soul, gird your spirit in the sackcloth of shame, roll your proud heart in the burning ashes of abasement, for that man was your father! Ha! I've touched the rock at last: you weep; then all is not lost. Now that the living waters have gushed out, oh! let them quench the parched fever of your pride; even though your tears be bitter as the waters of Mara, they are salutary. Pride needs such a tonic."

"Pride! what have I to be proud of, if what you

have told me is true?" said Vavasour, with a fresh paroxysm of agony, as, with his hands still covering his face, he turned to the wall, and rocked his head against it.

"Not much, certainly, as regards your father; but you are not responsible for his conduct, but for your own you are, and by that must every one fall or stand, at least at the highest and irrevocable tribunal; for though men judge by results, and therefore with them plausibility and success solders every breach and gilds every blemish, yet God judges by the intent only, and our own motives are the weights by which we shall be weighed in His scale. Philip," continued my uncle, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, as he drove the tears back from his own eyes, which, however, trembled in his voice, "forgive me, if I have spoken harshly of your father; I would even let his grievous faults be buried with him; for his dread personal account has long been carried over to Eternity, in whose summing up there are no errors; but that he has left a debt to his country that I would fain see so honourably and honestly discharged, as to make society forget the wrong he did it, in the good he bequeathed to it, as some poor relations submit cheerfully to a rich miser's frauds and caprices, in order to become his wealthy heir. It only rests with you, my boy, to be to the world as the miser's gold to the victimized relative; for, as even by our fairest virtues, stalks the gaunt shadow of its

changeling vice, so near, that sometimes even in our most poisonous vices grows their antidote. Do not then uproot your pride, and cast it out, but only prune it, and bend its stubborn and yet flimsy branches, till they become merely parasites round the giant oak of Principle; and then, depend upon it, you will find it a pleasant shade in sunshine, and a safe shelter in adversity."

"I will try to be all you say," said Philip, mournfully; "and yet, it seems as if I should have to be unmanly. Why, why have I been brought up to think, that, like the King, my father and my father's family could do no wrong, when they have done so much; and taught to resent it as a personal insult, if ever I heard him or them mentioned, save with the most fulsome praise?"

"Why!" echoed my uncle; "simply because

> "'Vice is a beldam of such hideous mien,
> That to be shunned, she's only to be seen!'"

"If," hesitated Philip, "my father behaved so ill to my mother, did he ever repent of his conduct towards her, or try to atone for it?"

"Alas! my dear boy, you little know—and may God keep you ever from the self-knowledge of the hardening and corroding power of systematic wrong! —as there are some deserts so sterile, that not even a bramble can grow in them; so are there some hearts so barren, that not even the thorn of remorse can spring

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up in them. Your father seemed to have made this passage from Fenelon the rule of his conduct, and it would do admirably for his epitaph: 'Here is a man who only strove to make himself happy; and he fancied he could succeed by dint of wealth and absolute authority: he obtained all he coveted, and nevertheless he was wretched!'* The bad man who braves the world, is at least an honest reprobate, and honestly pays the forfeit of every wrong he commits; but the slimy hypocrite, who in violating every law, human and divine, insists upon being treated as an honourable and an unimpeachable character, is a moral swindler, and must of necessity be both a liar and a coward; indeed, the former is always the latter, though the latter is not of necessity the former."

"But surely my father was not a coward, since he died of having fought a duel," said Philip, with another flush of his false pride.

"In the first place," said my uncle, "fighting duels is anything but a proof of courage; on the contrary, it is the test of cowardice, for it is the dread of the world's opinion preponderating over the fear of God, that is the cause of duelling; and that moral horizon which men falsely call honour, like the horizon of the material world, is only an imaginary line which sepa-

* "Voici un homme qui n'a cherché qu'à se rendre heureux: il a cru y parvenir par les richesses et par une autorité absolue; il possède tout ce qu'il peut désirer, et cependant il est misérable."

rates earth from heaven. But, if duelling be a proof of courage, your father had not even this to offer as a set-off to those vices which entail duels; for it was well known in his day, that he had slunk out of several, and as his doing so could not be attributed to principle, it was justly enough imputed to cowardice; and the duel of which he eventually died was thrust upon him, for the man whom he had injured pursued him, sword in hand, and having got him at bay in a sort of *cul de sac*, at the back of the bazaar at Cairo, bid him draw, and defend himself; 'and needs must when the d—l drives.'".

Philip champed his under-lip till it actually bled, and then said:

"Well but, Sir, would you not, under some circumstance, feel it necessary to fight a duel?"

"Under none, Sir. Why should I? I have been in thirteen general actions, have led two forlorn hopes, and have received two musket and three sabre-wounds; and, what was considered at the time rather more daring, once fought single-handed against a French convoy of three, in the Desert, seized their despatches, and gallopped safely off with them to our own head-quarters, which obtained me the honour of a hearty curse from Napoleon, and a cordial recommendation for promotion from Sir Ralph Abercrombie. Duelling is an egotistical vice not in my way: whoever doubts my personal courage, is welcome to the benefit of the doubt."

"But who," said Vavasour, returning to his own original grievance, as people generally do, "who could have so insulted me last night?"

"I am inclined to think it was a very slight insult, bursting from a colossal injury, like the fragile but mantling flowers of the centenary aloe, which takes deep root, through long years, before the hoarded secrets of its heart blush to its rugged surface."

"So then, you know who it was, Sir?" said Philip, his eyes suddenly kindling, and his delicately-chiselled features dilating with rage.

"I think I do."

"His name, Sir—his name? for another hour shall not pass before I drive his words down his craven throat."

"Nay, my dear boy, you must even sheathe your anger in the scabbard of justice; (ah! were more angers so sheathed, there would be much less ill blood in the world than there is), for the debit of the account lies the other way. There is living at present at—— a *ci-devant* Turkish merchant, of the name of Belzoni, whom you may have often heard me and the children mention: it was his wife, a very beautiful Greek woman, who was your father's last victim; but the wrong did not end there. All things in this world move—nothing stands still; they must either progress or retrograde; but evil alone has the power of doing both; and the evil your father had done neither ended with his life, nor with his victim, but recoiled upon her

child, who, deprived of a mother's care, early encountered misfortune, as all children bereft of this first great natural blessing do. She was let to fall, when about two years old, which has deformed and injured the health of what would otherwise have been one of the most beautiful little creatures that ever was seen; and after this first turning aside, the wrong still strode on with giant steps, and overtook Belzoni in the shape of pecuniary ruin; for, from being one of the richest, if not the richest, merchant in the East, heart-broken and dispirited, he neglected his affairs; so that poverty soon put in her remorseless execution, and swallowed up all he possessed. Now, which way, think you, the insult and the injury lie?"

Philip groaned aloud, as he leant his elbows on the table, and buried his face in his hands, while the tears trickled through his fingers.

"Poor fellow! I'm glad to see you cry," said my uncle kindly, as he laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, and dashed the tears from his own eyes; "such tears are the tax conscience pays to Heaven; let some of them be for your mother, Philip, especially if you don't care for her, for then is she the more entitled to them; tears, at least, are women's hereditary and inalienable property."

And my uncle walked slowly into the study, shutting the door after him, and leaving me alone with Philip, who, however, was too profoundly preoccupied with his own painful and conflicting thoughts to

perceive that I was, or ever had been, in the room; but as I felt intuitively that he would be annoyed if he thought that I had heard all that had passed, I got quietly up, and walked behind his chair to the door, the Turkey carpet preventing my footsteps from being heard; I then turned the handle sufficiently loudly to rouse him, he turned round, and hastily dried his tears.

"Philip," said I, getting up and kneeling upon a chair beside him, while I put my arm round his neck, for I was really sorry to see him so unhappy, "will you forgive me for being so rude to you last night? It was wrong, and I am very sorry for it."

"My dear child," he replied, kissing me, "I was not angry with you indeed: I had forgotten all about it."

"Ah, but it was very naughty of me for all that; but Mademoiselle de Guilleragues says, when children have no mother, they are always badly brought up."

Philip sighed, and I, quite forgetting my wish to spare his feelings, by not letting him think I had been in the room during his conversation with my uncle, added:

"I do so wish I had a mother; will you give me yours, Philip, and let me love her, if you don't care for her?"

"Who says I don't care for her?" said he, striking the table with his clenched hand, till all the breakfast things rang again, while the same volcanic look blazed

in his eyes, that had so frightened me on the preceding night, and I stammered out:

"Oh, I don't know, only I have heard you don't."

"Then take care not to repeat what you have heard," said he, now walking hastily up and down, with his arms tightly folded; "for it is not true."

"Isn't it? I'm so glad! then may I help you to love her?" said I, following him, and laying my hand upon his arm, as I looked up in his face.

He caught me up in his arms, kissed me convulsively, and then put me down, saying, as he rushed out of the room:

"Mirry, I'll try and not want any one to help me."

CHAPTER V.

DURING the next two years of our lives we began to use our own exertions in climbing the steep and rugged hill of life. As long as we are borne up it on the shoulders of others, we are apt not only to consider their murmurings as exaggerated, from being the fruits of discontent, but the little packets of experience they offer us from their own viaticums we fling away as not applicable to our individual wants; nor, indeed, beyond a certain point are they. For as that poor little marine insect called a polypus, scarcely bigger than a midge, is for ever throwing up particles of coral, which in the short space of twenty years become islands, and so alter the geography of certain latitudes as to render old charts useless, and new ones necessary, so in like manner that indefatigable, social polypus, circumstances, is for ever throwing up obstacles in the sea of

life, which render the fitness of things for one individual unfit for the steerage of another; for even in minor transactions, if we only go to see a person with the intention of conferring or soliciting a service, and arrange our line of conduct beforehand, we find that when we come to act, circumstances of the most trifling kind change our whole preconcerted mode of proceeding; consequently the only really useful, because immutable, accessories to our worldly navigation, are the compasses of judgment that can compute the broad outline of human nature, and the magnet of principle that never wavers from the polar star of right; all the rest of what is called experience, are mere social charts, good in particular times and latitudes, but which, certainly, from the propelling and ever-changing power of circumstances, require continually remodelling according to those circumstances.

No one ever more conscientiously endeavoured to have proper theories, and then to utilize them into practice than Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; but still both her judgment and her temper were often sorely tried by the injustice and caprice of my aunts; and but for her fondness for us, and her positive veneration for my uncle, I don't think anything would have induced her to stay; the more especially that during these two years, we had had no less than six English governesses, one after the other, who were all summarily dismissed; and indeed my aunts were right in the matter, though decidedly wrong in the *manner*, for these governesses

had been engaged for the sole and express purpose of teaching us English, and securing us against the Hibernian flowers of Nelly's colloquial eloquence; but when it was found that these ladies indulged in, and consequently transferred to us, such elegancies of diction and pronunciation as the following, my Aunts lost their tempers, and they their situations.

"*Ride,*" for drive; "I'm not *going to;*" "*such like;*" "*just like I did;*" "*come and help me put by the books:*" (the preposition absent without leave;) "*scent!*" that most vulgar of all vulgarisms, for perfume, or else the latter pronounced per-*fume,* which made my Aunts fume, and no wonder. Jersey, and St. Jameses, might have been forgiven them, as little people could not be expected to know that great people always said Jarsey and St. Jeemeses; but Villiers being an historical name, there really was something almost treasonable and deserving of thumbscrews or the Tower in vulgarizing it into Villyers! Rs and Hs, were also for most of them unelucidated enigmas; the former they threw out of the window, every time they told us to come away from the *winder;* while H they conceived had nothing to do with either heaven or happiness, and so, like charity, "oped" all things without it. They also talked of things having "cost a *deal* of money," or their having had a *deal* of trouble; and in vain we did our best to give them a great deal of the latter, still they never said so:—they only said, "they never *saw the like.*"

In short, they would have shone as modern novel writers, in whom such elegancies of style and language abound. Then it was, always *fetch* your books, or your work; never bring them, or get it; with that crowning vulgarity of English pronunciation, the accentuating the second or the last syllable of a word; as for instance, mer-*can*-tile, con-*ver*-sant, in-*dec*-orous, Sir Francis Bur-*dett*—(for there is nothing so plebeian as laying a stress upon a debt of any kind, and I only wish all one's creditors could be persuaded of this). The last of the anti-syntaxian incapables, that were dismissed, was a Miss Squiggins, a young lady of very limited acquirements, and extensive requirements, for as she herself would have expressed it, she "talked a deal about the *no*-bility, and the *genteel famlies* in whose *mansions* and *residences* she ad *bin in the abit* of always aving two days in each month, to go out, and *alf olidays* on Saturdays, *and such like.*"

Here is the manner in which the Squiggins' administration came to totter to its fall; another instance in the great secret, or back-door history of the world, which, by-the-bye, is its only real one, for all the others are carved, gilt, and got up to order; another proof, I say, of—

> "What dire offence from smallest causes springs,
> What mighty contests rise from trivial things!"

It so happened, that upon a gusty Sunday in March, which chanced to be the anniversary of the battle of Alexandria, Mrs. O'Donnell, out of one of those belli-

cose compliments, so rife at the time, had, in order to pay her court to my Uncle, crammed her six-and-thirty yards of sons and daughters, (as Captain Dapperwit designated the twelve O'Donnell girls and their three brothers,) into Turkish trousers and turbans, the latter (Heaven and Mrs. O'Donnell only know why) embellished upon the left side with three white turkeys' feathers, unless, indeed, it was an epigrammatic way of alluding to the Turks having shown the white feather on that occasion; which the turkeys, as their nearest representatives in Europe, were called upon to demonstrate. I should further state, that the whole of this costume, instead of being composed of any gorgeous oriental materials, was fabricated with the plainest and commonest white cambric muslin, unrelieved by any colour, save the scarlet morocco boots in which they terminated, with a subdued shade of the same tint that "the stormy winds did blow" into the noses of their unfortunate wearers, so that they looked fearfully and wonderfully like those trays of white wax lambs, with red tips to their noses, that used to be hawked about the streets of London, on men's heads, in the days of my youth, accompanied by the cry of

"One a penny, two a penny, fine white lambs!"

And I appeal to a generous and ever-impartial public, to know whether it was possible to see fifteen miscellaneous-sized members of the rising generation,

dowered with immortal souls, issuing in solemn pairs, from out an English Church, upon a British Sabbath, in such a plight, and not burst out laughing? No, it was not, and even my Aunts and the ever-prim, precise, and proper Squiggins, were not unreasonable enough to expect that we should be able to so refrain, therefore we might have had our laugh with impunity, but for my unlucky tongue: "*ah! cattiva lingua,*" as the poor Abbate Assai used to say. So, as soon as I could speak for laughing, I must needs cry out, not even confining the unflattering simile to one, but spreading the insult out thick over the whole fifteen:—"Why, you look exactly like the Forty Thieves!" —whereupon, Lily O'Donnell, whom it would appear, had all along most keenly felt the ridicule of being made to do duty as one of the fifteen amateur "turbaned Turks that scorned the world," and who had even resisted the exhibition, like major-domo in 'Blue-beard,' by taking refuge in the dust-hole during the mysteries of the toilet, now burst into such a bull-calf roar at my "odious comparison," that it completely drowned the band of the nine hundred and nine-ninth, which were at that moment defiling on their homeward march.

However, as I had compared the O'Donnells to the "Forty Thieves," it seems I was in duty bound to complete the simile by supplying the *jars*, which I did without loss of time, for my Aunts, who had no idea of any one's presuming to risk my uncle's popularity by

offensive proceedings to the worthy ——itts, but themselves, now each of them bestowed upon me a most energetic box on the ear, so that I was fairly *both-eared;* and they also insisted upon my making the most humble apology to all the O'Donnells, collectively and individually—which I was quite ready to do (without this *con spirito* accompaniment)—and they to accept it, as they were, one and all, the best-tempered, and the best brought up little creatures possible. But, even when the amnesty was signed and sealed by no less than thirty kisses—for I had to undergo fifteen for the fifteen I had inflicted—still my Aunts were not appeased; and as my Aunt Marley was getting into the carriage (in which she insisted upon conveying Mrs. O'Donnell home), she turned sharply to the innocent Squiggins, and said:

"I really don't see the use of governesses, if they allow children to be so insufferably ill-bred and impertinent; and I must beg, Miss Squiggins, that you will punish that abominable little wretch as soon as she gets home."

"*I intend to,* Ma'am," was the submissive, though to me anything but satisfactory, reply.

And yet, alas! had all the burning oil that Ali Baba, or, rather, that Morgiana, poured on the unfortunate thieves been suddenly poured upon the fire of my aunt's temper, it could not have inflamed it more, and she again turned round, and said:

"Really, Miss Squiggins! I must beg to dispense

with your services as soon as you can suit yourself with another situation; for I engaged you to teach the Miss Sedleys *English*, and not vulgarisms that a kitchen-maid might be ashamed of!"

Poor Squiggins! she cried a great deal that day, or, as she herself would have phrased it, "a deal," while Mademoiselle de Guilleragues said, as soon as we were seated in our own vehicle:

"Comment, ma chère meesse, les grandes eaux jouent encore? pour Marli, ça ne vaut pas la peine." And although this piece of wit was quite lost upon Miss Squiggins, who, not understanding English, even in its simplicities, could not be expected to comprehend French in its intricacies; but she felt and appreciated Nature's universal language, kindness, and all in declaring that "her 'art was fit to break," she pressed Mademoiselle's hand. The latter was in herself no judge of *les finesses* of the English language; but, as she had heard my uncle correct us, and deplore Miss Squiggins's phraseology, she believed in her secret soul, that her coadjutrix was guilty of flagrant grammatical peculations; but, nevertheless, with her usual *politesse de cœur* (that only *real* good breeding), she assumed that she was right, and my Aunt Marley wrong, and therefore said to her:

"I should advise you, my dear Meesse, to apologize to Madame, because —"

"*I!*" fired up Squiggins. "No, Madmeselle: I'll never be so *orridly mean sperited* as to apologize to

those who insult me—indeed, I ave no occasion to do so; for the Countess of Catchyourman—(all of whose daughters, the Ladies Do-pray, I finished, and who, the very first season they were introduced, made the most splendid matches among the ighest nobility, and ave the most mignificent settlements), I'm very sure will help me get a situation any day."

All the grandeur (!) of this speech—that is the "taste, high-life, Shakspeare, and musical glasses" part of it, was lost upon Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who, therefore, merely took up the threat of her own ideas where the eloquent Squiggins had interrupted her, and said:

"It is because you are right that you will have the more merit in apologizing to Madame Marley, ma chère Meesse; for when we are right, and yield to those who are wrong (except it be in matters of conscience) we are doubly right."

But all this was a little too quintessentially Christian, metaphysical, and philosophical for Miss Squiggins's capácity, neither of the three being exactly the *chevaux de bataille* of her order; so the consequence was, she tendered her resignation in form the next day, being the sixth and last of our English dictators, which must have been a great saving to my poor uncle, who generally, as in the case of "Squiggin *versus* Marley," thought it necessary to award for the defendant a verdict of half a year's salary. Perhaps,

like that numerous, yet peculiar class of patriots, who

> "Have left their country for their country's good,"

it was for our grammar's good that poor Miss Squiggins left us, as well, probably, as for that of some future Catchyourmans in the finishing of embryo Doprays; but, as far as the "Forty Thieves" were concerned, it was "frivolous and vexatious," for children always settle, not only their own disputes, but also their own accounts, better than grown-up people ever do for them, of which Miss Lily O'Donnell gave a signal proof the very following Sunday, after the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment," when *we* appeared at Church in scarlet cloth pelisses, braided with black! with the *obligato* tuck let down in each, showing but too vividly what they *had been* in their palmy days, and whether in humble imitation of the Pioneers or Grenadiers, I know not, but with black *fur* (not exactly bear-skin, but lynx, I believe,) bonnets, with a gold band round them, one young officer, who sat behind us was in such convulsions of painfully-suppressed laughter that, had Lover's charming song of "Molly Carew" been then written, I'm very sure that, instead of the responses, he would have repeated nothing but—

> "Lave off that bonnet, or else I'll lave on it
> The loss of my wandering soul!"

While upon going out of church, just after we had

kissed one battalion of the O'Donnells, the second division came up, headed by Lily, who said with a laugh almost as loud as the cry she had indulged in on the preceding Sunday:

"Why, Mirry! you and Grace look exactly like the Knave and King of Clubs."

Now surely this was infinitely better, and more germane to the matter, than making a state affair of the 'Forty Thieves,' and sending away poor Squiggins on that occasion for her vulgarity, *àpropos* of my pertness; but *che sarà sarà*, and all this was only the beginning of a break-up; for there are times when events begin to gather over families, and when that is the case with them, as with nations, those events progress rapidly, and are not long in culminating. Philip Vavasour, soon after his conversation with my uncle in the library, had returned to England with Lady Paulett and her children; and shortly after my uncle had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from Mrs. Vavasour, stating that her son had of his own accord run down to Wales to pay her a visit; that she found him much improved in every way, especially in the way most unlooked for; namely, his affection for her. All of which she rightly attributed to my uncle; but added, that he was soon to go to Christ Church, and in another year abroad with a tutor of Dingly Vavasour's selection, a Dr. Hazeldean; and then she could not help fearing a relapse, even worse than the original disease.

This letter delighted my uncle; but as well might we look to find roses without thorns, or light without shadow, as to expect to find even the purest happiness, that which arises from well-doing, without some counterbalancing alloy; and the same post brought a letter from my Uncle Charles (who had also accompanied Lady Paulett), with an entreaty for a heavy sum of money, as it seemed he had been speculating largely (and by different conversations with, and warnings, my uncle received from Belzoni it appeared), somewhat foolishly in suspension-bridges, and canals of divers sorts. All this preyed upon, and worried my poor uncle; the more so, that notwithstanding his own fine private fortune, the munificent emoluments of his salary (for in those days all official appointments, whether embassies, governments, or missions, were splendidly remunerated), and notwithstanding the extreme cheapness of everything at ——, from French wines, and French silks, down to French gloves, and ribbands, and all sorts of provisions, and house rent, then so ruinously dear in England, yet from the most unpardonable neglect, and the sort of perpetual saturnalia that was allowed unchecked to go on, he about this time found himself some thirty thousand pounds in debt. This was hard, to say the least of it, that he who had made a home for so many should see his own begin to crumble about him; his household gods mutilated, if not quite destroyed, one after the other, in the shape of

privations and retrenchments, which are ever the hard coin in which extravagance exacts payment from generosity and principle.

In short, he grew ill,—ill with that weariness of soul, for which there is no cure, save in the hands of Him who inflicts it. But how long do many wander in affliction's boundless and barren wilderness before the celestial manna falls to sustain their fainting spirit. It was terrible to hear the inward storm continually bursting forth in sighs, from a mouth round which only the sunniest smiles (all the reflections of hearts made glad) had hitherto pranked, to see the quips and cranks, and merry jests, that used to play at hide-and-seek with gravity in the sparkle of his eye, no longer there, but in their stead, sad epitaphs of tears, too proud to fall, yet still too big to be concealed.

It was terrible, too, to see that he thought he had nothing to look forward to by beginning to look back; for it is not till our hopes (that thick green foliage of the heart) begins to fall in sear and withered disappointments around us, that the tree of life becomes sufficiently bare to enable memory, the mind's piercing but melancholy eye to wander through the long vista of by-gone years. There was in his composition, take him all in all, less of incipient boredom, than in any human being, and never had I known him, when well in mind and body, dwell upon any of his own personal exploits, though of course, the pro-

noun I, was obliged to be used as a peg to hang anecdotes of the celebrities whom he had known, as for example, in the sketch he had given us of Goldsmith. But latterly, when he was glad of a cold as an excuse for keeping his room, and Grace, and Fido, and I were his only guests, he used sometimes to get her to read out the Parliamentary debates of 1780, and onwards, and it so happened that one evening she read out, "Speech of Colonel Paulett, Member for ——, upon the Honourable William Pitt's motion against Catholic Emancipation."

"Why, uncle, that must have been you?" said she.

"Well, I believe, Ma'am, that I am the culprit."

And Grace began to read it out, making neither mistakes nor hesitations, unless, when she came to Latin quotations; but still it was not likely that any successful speaker could bear to hear one of his oratorical *chefs-d'œuvre* mouthed by a child, so upon her stumbling over a passage from Sallust, which was introduced to exemplify his plummet-like power of diving into the internal principles of action, as compared with Tacitus's mere artistic facility of depicting the external motives of safety and interest, my uncle snatched the book from her, and though he merely began by reading it, he was soon transported back to the scene of his former triumphs, and was carried away into declamation, telling us, occasionally, to cry "hear! hear!" which, it must be confessed that we did, with as much zeal, and as little discretion, as the free list *claqueurs* of a popular actor.

"Ah!" said he, when he had concluded, "I really ought to be proud of that speech, for I remember Burke coming up to me and saying: 'Sir, allow me to shake hands with you, for I feel proud of claiming you as my countryman, as you have this night felt the wrongs of Ireland with an Irish heart, but expressed them with the eloquence of Tully, the sublimity of Plato, the humour of Menander, and the melody, grace, and pathos of Virgil; in short, young Sir, you were a worthy adversary of the courtly Petronius, whom you opposed, and have proved yourself fully a match for his polished ease, and even for his gravity and minuteness, all worthy of Quintilian though they be.'"

And as he recalled a praise of which he might well be proud, not so much from its full measure as from the source from whence it had flowed, the old sparkle lit up his eyes, and he turned gaily to me and said:

"Now, you puppy, why don't you learn to read properly, for though we dance very well, yet 'a spur in the head is worth two in the heel,' and then you might be able to spout my speeches, and Pitt's and Fox's to boot; and think of how useful that would be to you, Mirry, against you get into parliament, ha, ha, ha!" and we all laughed so heartily at the idea, that Fido began to bark, and when my uncle called him "the honourable member for Barkshire," and rose to answer him in a speech, the pith of which was, "that the country was going to the dogs," we laughed still

more, and separated for the night as edified and delighted with each other, as if we had been saying and doing the most sensible things in the world, and not half so tired as if we had been really listening to the nonsense in parliament. But that night I saw visions, and dreamt dreams. The light had again left my uncle's eyes; they were still kind, kind as ever, but sad; and as they fell upon a book seemed too dim, either with time or tears, (to some they are synonymous) to read; then came the heavy sighs that I so dreaded to hear in the day, and their echo seemed to be: "And why don't you learn to read properly, and then you might spout my speeches." When I awoke the next morning I answered the voice of the night, and said, "I WILL."

There are projects too mighty for one heart to contain; they must be confided to another, as some trees require propping, or they would break under their own exuberance; so I sought Mademoiselle de Guilleragues before she had left her room, and told her that my intention was to go to Mr. Waltham, and to get him not only to give me lessons in elocution (for I felt that the Squiggins' Anglo-Saxon argil was not exactly that wherein to transplant Demosthenes) but to teach me Latin, for, so armed, I thought I would some fine day surprise my uncle, and be of some little use in reading to him; for I remembered Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' words: "*It is not enough to wish to serve people, you must also know how to do it.*"

As rivers empty themselves into the sea, so all Englishmen, more or less, have a natural tendency to flow into parliament, even when they have nothing but emptiness to contribute to that political black sea, rightly enough concluding, I suppose, that in all seas there must be froth and foam, as well as salt and gems.

Mr. Waltham was, by no means, exempt from the national legislative ague, and therefore he entered into my scheme the more readily, that in teaching me, he would have an excellent target, to say, "Mr. Speaker," to aim those as yet aimless debates and still-born motions with which, for some years, he had been suffering from protracted gestation. Indefatigably then, for four months, did I labour, and listen, two hours each day, morning and evening, till I began to be amply repaid by Livy's exquisite narrations, and to almost catch the animating fire of Demosthenes. I know nothing more delightful or more exhilarating (and that seems at once to try and to strengthen the wings of one's own spirit) than the soaring into the lofty regions of great men's minds, and with them hovering over that golden Hybla, from which they have culled and hived the honied wisdom of immortality.

Ideas are the hot-beds of ideas, and without those of others, our own, however naturally luxuriant or profound, would soon dwindle and degenerate in the sterile soil of ignorance; for ignorance is a stucco that hides and defaces all things, like those exquisite

pillars of Perbeck marble in the Temple Church which barbarism had walled up and suppressed, but which taste and industry have once more developed. To the ignorant, and verily their name is legion, (nor does ignorance confine itself to the muslin of the world, but is to be found quite as often, if not oftener, among its moustaches and beards,) Aristotle's truism is unavailable, that it requires a clear and logical head to enter into the true meaning and sentiment of a work, and how are people, as Pope has it, to read

"With the same spirit that the author writ,"

if they have never read anything. I grant there is one drawback to allowing "*British Females*" this privilege, which is, that it would greatly tend to diminish, if not to destroy, that indiscriminate man-worship which now prevails to such an idolatrous extent in the United Kingdoms; but as a by no means contemptible equivalent, it would, at the same time, enable women to appreciate real superiority in men, where it exists, which certainly now they are totally incapable of doing; for, however they may run after, and offer the garbage of their worship to *celebrities*, because they *are* celebrities, they are utterly inadequate to sympathize with, or comprehend one glow of that bright intelligence,

"Whose own glory gilds the guerdon of their fame!"

For take them *en masse*, (without the many amiable, gifted, and admirable exceptions which prove the

rule,) that is, according to their own zoological classification as "Females," there is not on the face of the earth, a more thoroughly selfish, ignorant, inane, and uncompanionable animal, than the genuine, that is, the indigenous and uncultivated "*British Female;*" but was the species on that account, good domestic drudges and first-rate housekeepers, I could understand men's thinking it their interest to keep them down at twenty degrees below zero-pitch in the intellectual thermometer; but they are not, for among all classes, a lamentable ignorance of the capabilities of beef and mutton prevails, and for the most part, their ideas of housekeeping consist in the colloquial blistering ointments of talking servants and weekly bills, and of doing without the decencies of life, or the necessary elements of cookery, out of economy, or in getting bad things at nominally cheap places, and so poisoning people without fear of Judge or Jury; while they waste as much invaluable time and valuable money, in useless crotchet and not indispensable Berlin-work, as would enable them, if properly and usefully employed, to provide food convenient for their families, and make their homes comfortable, without which, the place one lives in may be one's *house*, but it is certainly *not one's home.*

It is, indeed, a melancholy look out, when one considers that more than one half of these charming crochet and lamb's-wool "*Females,*" (not but what crochet and lamb's-wool are very good things in their

way, that is, when they are not in anybody else's way, and the still beginning crochets do not interfere with the husbands' never ending *crotchets*); but still it is a lamentable thing, as I was going to say, when one thinks, that half these knitting and knotting "*Females*" are destined only to marry country curates, half-pay captains, or gentlemen occupying the exalted,* though not over-lucrative position of clerks in public offices; and yet the curate's children might go in rags, the captain's handkerchiefs unhemmed, and the clerk be put to his shifts from having all the buttons off his shirts, and the collars and wristbands in fringes before this useful class of "*Females*" would know how to remedy these deficiencies; whereas, had they a little more brains in their heads, and a 'leetle,' ever so little more knowledge, did it only amount to that infinitesimal globule, called "a dangerous thing," they would be able to do even all these mechanical works of necessity perfectly and diligently, for intellect in its propelling power is like steam, as there are very few things to which it may not be successfully applied.

But I am forgetting its great rival, Time, which had now decided the fate of Europe. Two years had passed since the Battle of Waterloo; the English were rushing abroad from all quarters, to astonish the French infinitely more than they had done in the Peninsula; my aunts were preparing to do likewise, to

* The stools of office are always high, whatever the fools of office may be.

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' great delight, and our great dismay, for my uncle Paulett refused to be of the party. Paris was no longer *his* Paris of 1790, and he did not care to revisit it; but the real reason was (as I learnt long after) the terribly deranged state of his affairs; thanks to my aunts' total neglect of all domestic concerns, and my Uncle Charles's horse-leech drains upon his coffers; altogether, he said his presence was indispensable in London.

Whether Don José had anything to do with this, I know not; but he arrived about this time, again covered with gold buttons, and a wound somewhat ulterior to those which heroes receive when seeking "glory at the cannon's mouth," and which he said he had received, while ascending a scaling-ladder, from a shrapnell-shell, at the storming of San Sebastian. The fact of the ladder no one seemed to question—they only altered its geographical position, and placed it at a lady's window; asserting the wound (which was in so defenceless a portion of Don José's person) to have been inflicted by one of the Household Brigade. But let their jibes and jests fly as fast as they might, poor Don José was in no state to give any of them a set down—not even himself—for he never glanced towards a chair but what he seemed to look as if he was reproaching the Fates for not having made him a cherubim. However, what's done can't be undone, and he had gone farther, and fared worse; indeed, the imp of mischief was up and

doing, and it appeared that no one in the house was to escape from its crooked influences. Poor Nelly was ill in bed, having cried herself into a perfect fever, from receiving the route to return to Ireland, as my aunt said they could not possibly take her abroad with them; when, lo! the harlequin's hand of fate conjured a letter on my Aunt Marley's plate at breakfast, which altered all her plans, at least for another year. The letter was from my father, and as it was one of the curiosities of literature, I shall transcribe it:

"Castle Sedley, May 29th, 1816.

"Dear Marcia,

"As you will probably see by the papers, that my old aunt, Sigismund, has, in a fit of pique against her grand-daughter, Mary Scott Barry, now Mrs. Penrose, left me Well's Court, her place in Gloucestershire, worth somewhere between £4,000 and £5,000 a-year, I think it so d——d unfair, that a person brought up to expect it all their lives, should at the eleventh hour lose it, through an old woman's whim, (d—n all women's whims, say I, old or young), that I have resigned every claim upon it, and have made it over to Mary, according to her grandmother's original intention. I write to tell you this, that you may not, on the strength of anything you see in the papers, bother me for money, for I have none. Had I had a family, that is, had my children remained with me, I should have thought it my duty to retain the old woman's

capricious bequest for their sakes; but as they did not, and are so much better off, God's will be done. Love to Grace and Mirry, and tell them not quite to forget their affectionate father.

"GODFREY SEDLEY."

Now, by some strange process of reasoning, peculiar to my Aunt Marley, or it may be to Irish heads in general, she thought that because her sister had married my father, that she, Marcia Marley, his sister-in-law, had an indisputable right to all his property, and an unquestionable control over him and his.

"Well, was there ever anything so provoking!" said she aloud to my Aunt Bell, to whom she handed over the letter. "Instead of going to Paris, I must now go over to Ireland to prevent this madman from beggaring himself and his children. I'd sail this very hour had I not promised Lady Laura O'Shindy not to fail her to-morrow, when she, foolishly enough, in compliment to her legal murderer of a husband, gives a sort of *fête* in commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo, where he lost half his left whisker, and carried off a coffee-pot and a keg of brandy from a French *vivandière*." Most days were boxing-days to me, as far as my aunts were concerned, but I had not the more holidays on that account, and this day was an especially stormy one, and every hurricane was preluded by the pleasing intelligence, that we were now beggars really, and that we could not

always expect to live upon our aunt's charity. It would, indeed, have been a meagre fare. Joy is always a twin, and when sorrow chances to be so, she is never utterly insupportable: and though Grace and I cried bitterly that day, yet we loved each other all the better for being miserable.

Both Nelly and my uncle were ill; she was confined to her bed, and he to his room, so I thought it would be a golden opportunity of utilizing both my culinary and classical acquirements; and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues thought so too, only we had a slight difference as to the whereupon. She, as a Frenchwoman, naturally inclined towards a *bon consommé;* but I, knowing both my uncle's and Nelly's taste (biassed a little by my own), decided in favour of some good mutton-broth. I don't know whether it was owing to the silver saucepan Vatel sent me up, or to my superior skill, but the broth was delicious; so white, so sweet, with the combined essences of carrots, turnips, and celery, a faint whisper of invisible onion murmuring through it, enough salt to prevent the sweetness from degenerating into insipid vapidity, (which is a great mistake either in cookery or women), and no parsley, that worst of herbal heresies, which causes the best broth in the world to find a watery grave: add to all this, there was not a particle of grease in it any more than if it had been made of Egyptian granite. Even Mademoiselle magnanimously confessed that it distanced all the *bouillons*

yet known, not excepting the poor Duke; for as she laughingly said, "Le cher brave homme, il est trop gras pour être un bouillon parfait."

But as I was about to pour the broth into the broth-bason, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues stopped me, and said there was still a *tour de force* left for me to achieve, that of toasting the bread without burning it, or my own face, and cutting it into long narrow slices afterwards, without at the same time cutting my fingers. I liked this part of the business the least; but once *lancée* on the tide of success, one has nothing farther to do, as the Americans say, but to go-a-head, whether it be in making toast, or in making fortunes; only one runs a greater risk of being done brown during the latter, than the former process. My first mission was to Nelly, whom I found still crying. "Come, Nelly," said I, "take this, and don't go on crying, or you'll make yourself seriously ill."

"I am sariously ill; for I hope you don't tink it's joking I am, Miss Miriam, and I on de brink of de divilish gulf, dat doesh be yawning at de fate of ivery ooman onchet or twichet in her natheral life, and de heart of me in schmidereens, just betwixt won ting and anoder."

"No, I know very well that you are ill, Nelly; but what I mean is, that you will get much worse if you go on crying and starving yourself as you are doing, and that is the reason I have brought you this, and want you to take it."

"Och! de blesshing o' God on you all de shame, me darlint, for your kindnessh, but shorrow a shup, I cud take of Mishter Vat-hellsh frog-schoupe."

"But it's not Mr. 'Vat-hell's' frog-soup;" said I, laughing, "it's mutton broth that you are so fond of, Nelly, and made by a first-rate cook."

"Och! itsh mighty little I tink of dem fusht-rate cooksh; I've sheen dem, datsh far before 'em at Clanfuddle."

"I'll cut your head off, Nell, if you dare say that you ever knew a better cook than the one who made this broth;" and so saying I uncovered the basin, and forced a spoonful between her teeth.

"Why, then indade I musht shay dat it ish good, ash good ash I iver tashted at Castle Shedley itshelf; itsh Misthus Schtillingflatesh making up, I shuppose; but shure, Missh Miriam, alannah, you shudn't have been after bringing it me up in de fine schilver bowl dat de quality ates out of; and, indade, I wonder Misthus Schtillingflate put it into it, for she ish, in ginral, mighty particular ash to not letting any of de upschtairish tingsh be ushed by de sharvantsh."

"But it was not Mrs. Stillingfleet who made it; it was I, Nelly; there, what do you think of that?"

"Och, murder! don't tell me that I've let your modersh daughter make broth for de likesh o' me! And to tink dat I've been baste enough to drink it, and let you schtand fornent me, and wait on me de while, ash if I wash a doochess, just!"

"But wasn't it good, Nelly?" said I, laughing at her ludicrous look of compunction and consternation.

"Good! I blave you! Och! it's ilegant broth dat, dere's do denying, for the Quane of Shaba cudn't have made it better for Sholomon in all hish glory!"

I had never heard before that the Queen of Sheba had officiated in a culinary capacity in favour of Solomon, but, as the compliment was a right royal one, I accepted it, and then said:

"Do you know, Nelly, I have good news for you? Aunt Marley is not going to France. She's going over to Ireland—to Castle Sedley."

"Whatsh dat you tell me, mavourneen?" said Nelly, bounding up in her bed, and clasping her hands. "And are we going—dat ish you, and Miss Grache,—and I, av coorse, to take care of yez?"

"Oh! I don't know anything about that; I only know that Aunt Marley is going, for she said so this morning at breakfast. So you must make haste and get well, Nelly, and then you'll know all about it."

"Och! thin, indade," soliloquized Nelly, apparently unconscious of my presence, and slowly settling first the collar of her nightgown, and then the frills of her cap, "I'm tinking, if datsh de way de wind blowsh, you may jusht take yourshelf out to Injee in three shipsh ash shoon as you plashe, Misther Jiffs, for itsh not me that you'll git for a figure-head, ash you call

it," and she gave the pillows two most gratuitous thumps.

Seeing that—

"All in the downs the fleet was moored,"

and that her thoughts were now running upon Jeffs' going in some unaccountable manner out to India in three ships (though one, one would think, might have sufficed, even for a greater man), I said:

"Well, good bye, Nelly! and I shall hope to see you down to-morrow."

Notwithstanding Nelly's flattering comparison to the Queen of Sheba, as I had no idea how she felt upon the occasion of her visit to Solomon, I felt very nervous as I knocked at the door of my uncle's dressing-room. First of all, he might not like being disturbed—not that his annoyances were ever made visible through the medium of temper; next, not knowing who was the *artiste*, he might decline the broth; and, as a climax, he might give me no opportunity of making the grand literary display that I had meditated. Well, what then? If all things did run counter to the way they were planned and wished—as all things generally do—I must only submit; for another of Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' golden maxims was: "Il ne faut jamais bouder le sort,* car il est votre

* You must never sulk with fate; for he is your husband, that is, your lord and master.

mari, c'est-à-dire, votre seigneur et maître;" while poor Squiggins used to dilute and vulgarise this nucleus of wisdom into: "Young ladies should never appear put out in company!"

The great difference between their two systems of education was, that with Mademoiselle de Guillerargues, it was a principle to "always *be* what you would seem," and with Squiggins, "merely to try and appear what you ought to be;" for the former, as far as she could perceive and prevent it, never allowed an *arrière pensée* to stimulate any of our actions, great or small, and would correct us for vulgar expressions, loud talking, and *brusque* and inelegant movements when we were by ourselves in the school-room, as much as if we had been *en représentation* before five hundred persons; while she also exacted as scrupulous a degree of good breeding and good manners (the latter are the former in action) as if we had been strangers, and duchesses, or two *millionaire* relations, towards whom the slightest under-bred omission, or commission, might jeopard a fortune; whereas poor Squiggins used, it is true, to correct us for having said or done such and such things before *Mrs. Colonel!* this; and *Mrs. Major!* that; the *Earl and Countess* of something else; and Mr. So-and-so *and his Lady!* as, in her ineffable vulgarity, she used to designate people, and would occasionally remind us that it would be good policy to make a purse for such a person, or paint a pair of

screens for another, as they would be likely to do this for us, or give us that, if we did.

Poor Squiggins! I am sorry she was sent away with that irritating little animal in her ear (the more especially as I know she thought scratching was not *genteel!* however desirable she seemed to consider coming to the scratch was, (oh!) as in the case of the Ladies Do-pray, and the Earls, their husbands); but, barring this severe course of homœopathic oral zoology, I think it was lucky that she went, for ever since I have come to years of discretion, I have had an insurmountable horror of the mock and the sham, in all thinks animate and inanimate, more especially of patent, lacquered best Brummagem drawing-room manners, which, as far as their influence upon the moral tone of society goes, is about the same that driving occasionally into the country for air, would be upon one's health, while all the drains were neglected, and the windows never opened, at home. I hesitated a moment outside the door to ascertain if any one was with my uncle; but all was still. Presently I heard the rustle of paper, accompanied with a deep sigh. This determined me, and I knocked.

"Who is there?" cried my uncle, and again I heard the crumpling of paper, and the sound of a drawer, as if hastily opened and shut.

"It's I, Uncle—M

"Come in, my child." And in I walked.

"I have brought you some broth, and you must take it."

"Thank you, darling, I will; for, oddly enough, I was just wishing for some, but I did not like to ring. I hate being bored with servants when I'm ill. This is capital broth! I suppose Mrs. Stillingfleet made it, for it's beyond Vatel, because what he'd call beneath him."

"No; it was not Mrs. Stillingfleet who made it; it was your new cook,"

"Why, hang it," said my uncle, with a frown, as he put back the spoonful of broth he was in the act of conveying to his mouth, now evidently dreading some new freak of my aunts, "they haven't got a new cook, have they?"

"No," said I, kissing his forehead as I leant over the side of his easy chair, "they have not, but you have; and though only a woman cook, or what Captain Dapperwit calls a plain cook, she can have the first references from members of the *no*bility, and the *genteel* families where she's lived," added I, concluding with a spice of Squiggins.

"Well, she makes deuced good mutton broth, at all events: where does she come from?"

"The school-room direct, at your service, Sir, for it was I; I, by myself, I! who made it."

"You, Mirry?" cried he, laying down the broth-basin, and looking back at me. "Shake hands then, for you are an honest fellow. I hate your fine ladies who know how to do nothing, and even if they do are ashamed of doing it, forgetting that affection and

pretension are the only things that really vulgarise people; for few are vulgar from what they are, but many are so from trying to appear what they are not, and for that reason prim vulgarity is always more vulgar than *laisser aller* vulgarity, because there is more pretension about it. But who taught you to be such a good cook? for hang me if I don't think you will soon rival Vatel."

"Oh! for the last three years, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues has made us take lessons, for two hours, twice a-week from Mrs. Stillingfleet, and write out the different bills of fare for the last year for every dinner in the house, though you did not know it; 'et je me flatte,' added I, standing at ease with all Vatel's *hors-d'œuvres* dignity when waiting for orders, 'que Monsieur, n'a pas eu raison de se plaindre du menu?'"

"Mademoiselle de Guilleragues is a deuced sensible woman, and I respect her," said my uncle, taking a pinch of snuff; "the more so," added he, with a sigh, "that I think it is very probable if things go on as they are doing, that I shall not be able to afford even one cook soon, much less three; will you be my little cook then, Mirry?" said he, putting his arm round my waist, and drawing me towards him.

As I kissed him, I saw the terrible large tears again in his eyes; I dreaded those big tears, as German children dread the Erl King. How many moments of mortal struggle there are in life, when if one don't

laugh, one must cry; it is always wiser to do the former if we can, and a matter of conscience to make others do so, if possible; so, crossing my arms, throwing back my head, and pursing up my mouth like Lady Laura O'Shindy, I said:

"Oh, fie! sure you would not have me such an ojus, ungenteel thing as a cook; the mere animal wants are nothing; mental sustenance is everything, for the elevating principle must always be inforced."

"You d——d puppy," said my uncle, flinging a bit of bread at me, and now wiping the tears from his eyes; but, thank heaven, the tears of laughter; "it is very wrong to allow you to take off that silly old woman, I suppose; and yet, for the life of me, I can't prevent you: it amuses me so."

"It amuses me so-so, you mean; for as Lord Frederick says, that is the order of Lady Laura's philosophy."

"Ay," laughed my uncle, "for according to Dapperwit's amendment, she is of the *no go* sect of philosophers; the African who saw ice for the first time called it water fast asleep; but I think he would have called Lady Laura's philosophy, at least her philanthropy, humbug in a stagnant pool."

"Except," said I, "that instead of duck-weed, it is full of goose-weed, so the sooner we get out of it the better. Shall I read to you?"

It was two years since he had heard me read, so the reminiscence was anything but edifying; but he

was two well-bred to tell me so, therefore merely said, patting my cheek:

"No, my child, that would be giving you too much trouble."

To which I replied—it might be with a slight tone of pedantry—but recollect it was my *début*, and, thank heaven, one don't speak Latin every day!

"Onus non est appellandum quod cum lætitia feras ac volupte."

"Why, Mirry!" exclaimed my uncle, with unfeigned astonishment, "as I'm a living man I thought I heard—"

"A dead language," interrupted I; "you did so, dear uncle, and let me repeat to you in plain English, that that which we do with pleasure, can scarcely be called a trouble; and as I have no pleasure like doing anything for you, I asked Mr. Waltham to have the goodness to teach me Latin and English, that I might be able to read to you properly."

"You are a dear, good, excellent girl," cried my uncle, folding me in his arms, "and a clever fellow to boot: there is something in you. I hate your empty people, for like empty casks they are always hollow: the idea was a good one: what put it into your head?"

"You, you put the spur in my head: don't you remember your telling me, that if I could read properly, then I might be able to spout out your speeches; this was in jest, but I set to work in earnest, and so

poor Mr. Waltham has had no peace, night or day, for the last fourteen months."

"Well, I'm sure his pupil does him great credit."

"You don't know whether I do him credit or not, till you have heard me read," said I, taking up a volume that lay on the table, and which happened to be Pliny's letters, in the original. I read out one of them, my uncle exclaiming every minute:

"Good! very good! excellent! upon my word."

"Pooh," said I, flinging down the book, "I've no patience with a rich man like Pliny being taken unawares, with only a cucumber and a mullet, when his friends dropped into supper; I think the Ancients must have been like Lady Laura O'Shindy, and only had things for show, on the elevating principle, I suppose?" and I got up, and walking to a small bühl book-case, took out an old volume of the Annual Register, and opened it at a speech of my uncle's, upon the Slave Trade, which I instantly began to read, or, rather, to declaim; to be sure I missed the parliamentary *mise en scène*, of a shirt and waistcoat to put my left-hand oratorically into my bosom, as Mr. Waltham always did, or nether garments, with convenient pockets, even if there was nothing in them; but there is nothing like resource, so I made my spencer do duty for all three; and it appears I spoke the speech so well, at least so entirely to my uncle's satisfaction, who, by the bye, very improperly kept walking up and down, and crying "hear, hear!"

though he should have formed part of the stuffing of his chair, and held his tongue, as I addressed him as "Mr. Speaker," for when I concluded he said:

"'Pon my word I'm not jesting, I never heard anything better; enunciation, modulation, emphasis, and the inflection of the voice, all perfect; the action graceful, concentrated, and natural; by George! Mirry, it's a thousand pities that you are not a boy, for decidedly you'd make a figure in the House."

"Dear me, uncle mine!" laughed I, spinning round, and making what children call a *cheese*, "I'd a great deal rather make a curtsey out of it;" and I might have added, had I been old enough to have had the sense; but thirteen is always thirteen, till it becomes thirty, when with ladies it seldom gets beyond that; yes, in truth and great wisdom, I might have added: "or a bason of mutton-broth;" for verily one bason of good mutton broth is of more efficacy to the constitution (if not very much shattered indeed) than ninety and nine washy speeches in Parliament.

CHAPTER VI.

hree days, we were to leave —— for London.
)use was all in confusion, not with that agree-
fervescent sort of excitement which precedes a
it journey, but with that desolation of confusion,
orough stripping, which is the forerunner of a
reak-up; and yet nothing, save the mute clo-
) of the bare book-shelves and empty wardrobes,
) at that time, that we were about to leave the
ld house for ever; but leave it as we may, the
in which we have passed our first happy, care-
at cared-for years, never leaves us, but through
) after-vicissitudes of life, its trials, or its
)hs, its poverty or its wealth, its hopes or its
its unmixed misery, or its compound weal and
that house is still our refuge through every
embosomed deep within the shelter of our

hearts; to it we return, wending in thought its every nook and corner, and finding in each, green spots of hallowed ground, made such by some word, or look of love, from eyes or lips now closed for ever. Even childhood's most bitter tears, first shed in that old house, become strung pearls upon the long chain of memory. When all is dark and drear before and around us, we can still look back and see the little window or the big one, as it may be,

"Where the sun came peeping in at morn!"

and the bee and the butterfly were waiting for us in the garden, while with still sleepy eyes we watched the moats that danced beside the sun-beams, undecided, which we'd rather be, till quite aroused by the myriad sounds that tell the world it's day, we rose to welcome it with ever-budding hopes and buoyant hearts, sure it would bring us some pleasure, or some good. Oh, false! capricious! cruel day! to grow so changed and churlish, that in after years we should wake sighing, and rising, dread to meet you!

We were dressing to accompany my Aunt Marley to one of Lady Laura O'Shindy's botheropedias, as Nelly so truly and aptly called those philosophical gatherings, not to say festerings. Bloom Belzoni had come to wish us good bye, as she was going to Paris with her father. She, Grace, and I, were laying all sorts of plans for the future, in that dear, delightful

Paris, which Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had imbued us with an idea was synonymous with Paradise (as it really almost is). Detachments of the poor O'Donnells were crying in different parts of the room (the British Grenadiers' "occupation" being "gone," I suppose it was necessary to have British volun-tears), though we had made the handsomest testamentary dispositions in their favour, of our books and playthings, and I had that very morning presented Lily with a very splendid dog's-eared edition of the "Arabian Nights," in the fly-leaf of which appeared the following valuable autograph:

"TO THE FORTY THIEVES,

"FROM THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIENDS,

"THE KNAVE AND KING OF CLUBS."

There was a sort of modern marriage going on between me and my gloves, for, among some dozens, I was hunting for a pair, *assisted* by two maids. Had Miss Squiggins remained long enough to *finish* us, there would have been nothing remarkable in my thus running after fellows, and being hand-in-glove with them as soon as ever they appeared; but as Mademoiselle de Guilleragues did not approve of such proceedings, either in dressing-rooms or drawing-rooms, it was fortunate for me that she was not there, though she was not long absent; for soon after, the door opened, and Nelly, in a white gown, rather short, with

one narrow flounce quite at the edge of the hem, like a pillow-case, a white silk shawl, a white straw bonnet, much in the shape of a coal-scuttle, only decorated at respectful distances with little white satin ribbon bows, like those on the tail of a kite, white silk gloves, and a pocket-handkerchief, about the size of a breakfast-cloth, in her hand, now entered, literally supported by Mademoiselle de Guilleragues and Mrs. Stillingfleet, looking almost as white as her gown.

"Why, Nelly, how smart you are!" laughed Grace and I, both in a breath.

"Not yit—not yit," murmured Nelly, enigmatically, as she dived into her capacious pocket, and drew forth some sibylline-leaves, in the form of printed shop-cards; "not yit, for itsh afther, for de resth of one's life dat one ginerally shmartsh for it," here she groaned. "God in Hiven iver blessh, watch over, and purtect yez, me darlintsh, ish de lasht, ash it hash alwaysh been de fust prayer of Nelly Bawn."

"Nonsense, Nelly: you're not going to leave us, surely?"

"Lave yez; do you tink itsh sticks, or schtonesh I'm made of, dat I'd lave yez, if I washn't dhruve to it fairly, no, but unfairly turned away jusht on de wide world to go to dish troochin? De misthess says she's not going to schtay in Ireland, only for sixsh monts, and dat she manes to put yez to schule for dat time in Loonun, and din take yez over to Franche, where she says she won't take me, becase I'd be

of no ushe, and what ushe I should like to know ish half de sharvantsh in dish houshe, espeshly all dim powthered baboonsh of futmen, who are no more use nor sho many ring-tailed monkeys, only not half sho divarting. Sho ye see deres noting left for me, but to put an ind to myshelf, and dat's what I'm going to do."

"For shame, Nelly," said Grace; "you, who are so good and so religious, how can you be so wicked as to even think of such a thing; and how do you suppose we should feel if you did?"

"Oh, indade, Missh Grace, tanksh be to de Lord, you're now grown bote such fine, big, knowledgeable young ladiesh, dat I'm sure yez'll shoon be reconshiled to my fate, and argey dat itsh de way of de world; and whin onceht a ooman hash made oop her mind to put an ind to hershelf, itsh little matter how shoon she doesh it."

"Nelly, do go back to bed," said I, "for I'm sure you must be delirious; no woman in her senses could think of doing what you talk so coolly about."

"Thrue for ye, Missh Miriam, darlint; no ooman in her shenshes would make over de fee-shimple of hershelf to any divil; and it only showsh de number of poor demented half-witted crathers dere ish in de world."

"Well, as you have proclaimed yourself one of them, we must take care to prevent your putting your horrible threats into execution," said Grace.

"Too late, ma vourneen, too late; de prashte and de parshon is bote waiting."

"The priest and the parson both waiting; surely, no ministers of any church can be found to abet such wickedness," broke in Grace.

"Itsh just de prashtes and parshonsh dat doesh be always abetting dish sort of wickedness," said Nelly, "for widout dem it cudn't go on; sho I recommind me shoul to de Almighty, and may he forgive Fader O'Toole, and de Riverind Ulic Bindfasht, if dey do ash much mischief to me in making me Mishes Jiffs, ash Fader Philarity did in making me Mishes Bawn."

"Ha! ha! ha! so you're only going to be married, Nelly," cried I and Grace, laughing immoderately.

"*Only* going to be married! och! listen to how de innochent crathers talk," cried Nelly, clasping her hands and turning up her eyes; "de very wordsh dat Judy Mc Manus said (barring dat it wash hanged instead of married), when in de Rebillion dey said of one of Napper Tandy's relations dat wash taken alive, dat he was to be transhpoorted for life, 'not a bit of it,' saysh Judy, 'he'sh only going to be hanged.'"

"Well, but I'm sure, Nelly," said we, still laughing, "Jeffs seems a very good man, and so fond of you."

"Och, to be sure, av coorse; dere alwaysh sho fond of one before dey get one into dere clutches; and for goodnesh, dey all bang de world beforehand, but

afther, dey bang noting but dere wivesh and de doorsh whin dey go out to divart demshelves."

"Well, thank goodness, it's only being married that you call putting an end to yourself, Nelly," said Grace.

"Sho it is, sure, Missh Grace; for I know no more sartin way for a ooman to put an ind to hershelf den to be trown into de condemned cell of matrimony, and manacled wid a husband; sure, after dat, dere's no more of her freewill left dan a hungry cat would lave of a fresh herring. Arn't we toult, dat 'in Heaven dere's neider marrying, nor giving in marge;' and av coorse it's just dat one sinsible an humane circumstance dat makesh it Heaven, oderwishe dish world might sarve one's turn very well to continue in."

"But tell me, Nelly," said I, after I had pondered a little over this last theological nut that she had given us to crack, which cogitation ended at least in a doubt leaning to her side of the question, and—

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds,"

so at least says the poet of the heart, Tennyson; "Nelly, tell me, are you going to remain at ——, or to return to Ireland, when you are Mrs. Jeffs?"

"Neider de one nor de oder, Missh Miriam; for do Misshesh Marley tinksh I'm not fit for Franche, and too bad entirely for Loonun; yet niverdelessh,

itsh in Loonun I'm going to live; and do av coorse I cudn't expect dat such a grand gintleman as Sur George (long life to him) wud iver put hish nose into such a plache ash mine; yet maybe, Missh Miriam, you dat can make him do anyting, would be afther pershuading him shumtimesh to put shum of my schnuff into hish beautiful noshe;" and so saying, she placed in my hand one of the cards she held in hers, whereon was inscribed in irreproachable copper-plate, with many flourishes:

ELLEN JEFFS,

TOBACCONIST AND DEALER IN ALL SORTS OF FOREIGN SNUFFS,

FLEET STREET, TEMPLE BAR.

I promised to use my interest (how well that sounds if only *à-propos* of getting a person to deal at a snuff-shop, or even of the still more petty retail trading of a Whig Ministry), and then said:

"I suppose, Nelly, Jeffs remains with the yacht, as I don't see his name on the card?"

"No, Missh; for de yacht ish sould to Lord Frederick, Jiffs tells me, afther it hash taken yer and Sur George to England."

"Then I'm surprised Jeffs don't help you to keep this shop."

"He doesh sho, Missh."

"Then I wonder his name is not on your shop-card?"

"Schtick him up, indade! What would hish name dere, when he'sh promised to kape himself quite d mannerly, and not be lording and masthering it r me in any way? and if itsh autority he wantsh, e made him free of Mike Bawn's, me late plague's llalah, and given him de run of Dermot's shoul-s, and shure dat's exercoise enough for him, for t spalpeen of a Dermot will be the death of me it, for itsh only lasht wake dat Fader O'Toole toult e dat he's alwaysh up at Fort Goliah among de jers, psalm-singing wid dat great black crocodile of Calvinist, Colonel Clavering; and shinche he wint o sarviche at Lady Laura O'Shindy's (dere's a name o sit down for life wid), he'sh scho schloppy and o dirty dat de pig at home ish a buck to him; e'll shomtimesh have dat falde of buther-cupsh coat t she callsh a livery, schtuck togedder wid won utton acrosh hish chist, and his arums not crammed nto the schlavesh itshelf, and inshtead of hish yellow lush leg-shamers, he'll have hish ould corderoysh nd brogues on, and de handsh of him ash black as wo five-fingered bogs, and she niver to see it or ay a word about it, but just strutting about dat onybrook Fair of a plache of hersh, wid all de card-oord grandeur of a tragedy-quane in a stage-play; purty short of mishthruss for a boy to have, who ishesh to rishe in the world, and become a futman! ch! but itsh Mishter Ulic Bindfast, sho schtiff nd sho grand, ash if de whole binch of bishops was

wid yez."

Here Mole appeared to say that the ca
at the door; and my Aunt Marley was v
us. The grin on his face did more to e
departure of the bride elect than any thing
have done, while taking a hasty but s
leave of Bloom and the O'Donnells, we
best of our way down stairs.

CHAPTER VII.

ALAS! for my readers, I am neither Hogarth nor Cruikshank; and therefore, how hope ever, with merely my "grey-goose quill" to convey to them even a faint idea of the Palazzo Vascello; for such was the euphonious and grandiloquent name which Lady Laura O'Shindy had bestowed upon the dirtiest lodging in the dirtiest street in ———; wholely and solely because it had the disadvantage at the back of having an old ricketty balcony hanging over a river called the Onda, which was a sort of supplement to the sea, in short a kind of marine infirmary to the harbour of ———, where all the foundered and dilapidated vessels rode at anchor, or underwent repair, sending up into Lady Laura's domicile the combined but by no means balmy, odours of pitch, tar, bilge-water, and defunct cats and cabbage-stalks, with which its muddy waters were strewed; and so far it certainly did resemble the Adriatic, that

lethargic sea, for which the poets of all ages have burdened their lays with more lies than its waves can ever wash away.

This likeness it was, which no doubt suggested to Lady Laura's "love of the beautiful," the idea of bestowing that at once nautical and Venetian cognomen upon her abode, and also of christening a crazy bridge that conducted from a marine-store shop at her side of the river, to a large warehouse for weighing merchandise on the opposite bank, the Bridge of Sighs! though, as Captain Dapperwit observed, as all the sighs came from the mouth of the river, it was much to be deplored that it had not a sweeter breath; but as above the mast-heads of the valetudinarian vessels rose in the distance the tufted foliage of the patriarchal trees of a sort of *prado*, or *corso*, in short, the fashionable drive of the —— ites. Lady Laura voted her charming *locale* the best *sitti-ation* (as she pronounced it when she wanted to be very English; that is, more English than the English), the very best sitti-ation in ——; and Lord Frederick agreed that it was certainly a *prime* one, as her rooms were over a gun-maker's shop, though it was to be hoped her landlord was honest, or an overcharge might be fatal.

In short, many were the atrocious puns that the perfumes and pretensions of the Palazzo Vascello gave rise to, among others, that the Old Ship in plain English would have been a better name for it. In

order to attain to this amphibious paradise, you entered by a dark, dirty, narrow side passage, certainly exceedingly like, both in smell and size, to a Venetian vicolo, having groped about a dark closet, called "The Hall," you got into a sort of narrow, creaking, cork-screw round-about, which, more to your surprise than pleasure, turned out to be the stairs, as it was; however, when you did get up, you arrived at another part of the show—namely, a small door, with four small panes of greenish glass, upon peeping through which (a recreation you were allowed to take in the handsomest manner without being asked to pay anything) you beheld a carpet-broom, standing like a wooden sentry in one corner, a dust-shovel lying like a discarded shield on the floor beside it, and in the opposite corner a hair-broom, upon which hung a kitchen rubber (intended no doubt to represent a standard-bearer, for everything at Lady Laura's was intended to represent something that it was not—from the sentiments downwards), while in the small window overlooking the Onda stood an immense nettle plant, propped against a frame, and hung with little coloured lamps, always ready at a moment's notice to shed their light upon an *impromptu festa*.

Now the superficial reader may think that there was nothing very remarkable (unless it was its rarity) in all this; but the surprise consisted in a slip-shod cook-maid throwing open the door, and asking if you would not like to leave your shawls, or other traps, in the

conservatory! By which means you were pithily and dexterously informed of a remarkable fact that you never could have divined of your own unassisted accord, namely, that on account of the nettle plant, a standard broom, and the kitchen rubber—which I suppose botanists would designate the *Guenillia Grandifudgea* — this was called the conservatory. Upon traversing a corridor of a yard and a half in length, and half that quantity in width, an opposite door was thrown open, and you were ushered into two small, very low rooms, with rafters across the ceiling, like those of an old-fashioned English farm-house; but to hide these beams, Lady Laura had cut out luxuriant wreathes of ivy in green glazed paper, attached to stems of brown worsted, and stuck on with large corking pins, the heads of which, when seen, would do very well, she said, to imitate stars, trying to pierce through the foliage.

The paper on these low walls was truly magnificent, consisting of colossal figures in colossal galleys, as gorgeous as the unrestricted use of red, blue, green, lilac, and yellow paint could make them. These galleys, and their occupants, were intended to represent Cleopatra sailing down the Cydnus (only judge then of the crew's surprise at seeing all this green paper ivy hanging over them); but if they were alarmed at so unheard-of a phenomenon, serve 'em right, as they should have kept their eyes fixed upon the large white glass bead, or Roman pearl, which Lady Laura had,

; in the two rooms were drinking; and indeed,
lge by the huge amphori strewing the galleys,
ıld appear that the Egyptian Queen must have
addicted to that species of hilarity; though, as
eakest always goes to the wall, we may at least
that none of the beverages represented upon
Laura's paper were intoxicating.

is paper she invariably called the tapestry; and
:ver looking-glasses could be poked from ceiling
)r, like an auction-room, they were inserted, so
the poor little rooms were stilettoed through
ırough with the envious rents made by these
ıerous mirrors, which were for ever casting in-
ıs reflections upon the strange specimens of the
n species, wont to congregate in those saloons.
ot to mention, that from the centre beam of the
e room was suspended, as a "wonderful lamp,"
a most wonderful one it certainly was,) a pink
stuffed Cupid; and if his heart was only half

twisted with blue satin ribbon; while the "Idalian Boy" was "kicking up his heels" in an opposite direction in the ivy waste paper office, some were ill-natured enough to remark that he looked more like an owl in an ivy-bush than a Cupid.

The floors of the rooms were curiously undulating; so much so, indeed, that they would have delighted Capability Brown; and Lady Laura, to make the most of them, had covered them with a green carpet, richly strewed with blue and yellow flowers (another surprise for Cleopatra.) From the uneveness of the rooms, they looked ricketty, and *maladive;* and from the little patches of gilding stuck wherever either wood or plaster could be got to submit to the innovation, they looked as if they were undergoing a course of anti-dingy sunset pills: yet, nevertheless, the complaint seemed to gain ground; for the very crooked bay window gave these apartments a decidedly dropsical appearance. It would not be possible to sit in judgment upon the chairs, as only half of them were intended to afford sedentary repose, the seats of the other half being composed of blue satin, with wreaths of pink crape roses in bold relief, and the thorns, strong and sturdy, like an eruption of traps and spring-guns, most effectually "warning people off of their premises."

Among poor Lady Laura's numerous absurd delusions, was an idea, that professing a love for all sorts of nasty, ugly birds, made her appear youthful, innocent,

nd romantic. A real love for anything is an ennobling eeling; and had a person the monomania of being fond f a spider or a toad—though one could not sympahise with the *engouement*—one would nevertheless espect it. But Lady Laura was incapable of being eally fond of anything; she had too much vanity to e so, for vain people have no affections, and from the ncapacity of loving anything arose the overflowing enevolence of professing to love everything. The esult of this ornithological profession was, that her ooms were infested by an old jackdaw, who, while tealing the sugar for himself, used to talk of "the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers," and, in knocking down cups and glasses, jabbered amain about the "elevating principle;" while in the balcony was a startling instance of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties in the shape of an infant parrot, who, not being able to speak fluently, was in the habit of doing all its ideas in screams, for as yet it had acquired but two phrases from the source it was in the habit of deriving information: the one was, "D—d stingy old dust!" an energetic, though not very polished or high-bred piece of declamatory eloquence, which it had picked up on board the different vessels from the sailors with whom Lady Laura was in the habit of holding affable and philanthropic converse of a morning over the balcony, though, with truly feminine delicacy, she had never been known to encourage what she justly called their *ojus* love of brandy and

tobacco by giving them money. Now, it must in fairness be owned that Lady Laura's non-donative habits did not arise solely from parsimony; and had she been content to be honestly poor, without insisting upon being fine, no one would have had any right to animadvert upon her shabbiness—at least, those who did so would have had such bad hearts, that their vetos would have been little worth. But it was her eternal straining after effect, and subpœnaing false pretences, such as giving gooseberry-wine, and calling it champagne; or, if taxed with the fact, by some remorseless Nemesis, of Fudge! she would say it was quite as dear as champagne, only she preferred it. The same with bad tea, and bad bread; all of which Lady Laura—according to her *ipse dixit*—had the misfortune to pay dearer for than any other persons did for good, only she of course preferred the former. Neither had any one any business to animadvert upon where, or how, she chose to live; but from the moment she packed people together, like the poor animals in Smithfield, and called these *Folkmotes*, parties, then everybody had a legitimate right to criticise and to complain, and poor Lady Laura entailed upon herself commentaries far more voluminous than Cæsar's. Diamonds may be dispensed with even at Court, if one has not got them, but paste puts a plebeian stamp upon all who are guilty of it, which evidently proclaims the wearer unfit to be there.

No one, I should hope, would be either so ill-bred, or so unfeeling, as to laugh at a young lady for appear-

ren at a state ball, in a plain muslin dress, had it ost two-pence a yard, provided it were perfectly untumbled, and well made; but did this same ; lady attempt to aggravate the original sin of ropenny muslin, with common, or dirty artificial s, or manacles of mock bracelets up to her s, then indeed she becomes as fair game as any s to be met with from the first of August to d of January inclusive.

; to return to the infant parrot. Pythagoras has ed, in his golden verses, that "Power is never m Necessity;" now, as no necessity can well nger than that of correcting any young person a mere parrot) at the onset of their educational for using such inelegant expressions as the ones rds had picked up from the sailors, Lady Laura ie possessed the power of correcting her fea- l favourite, and therefore always exercised it, by liately crying out: "Oh, fie! Philomella, fie!" e said "Polly was such an ojus, vulgar name," she exchanged it for that of Philomella, and devoutly did every one who had the misfortune ke the parrot's acquaintance wish, that like her sake, the Athenian king's sister, she also had er tongue cut out; the consequence was, that its epic of "D—d stingy old dust!" Philomella s edified every one by her speedy repentance those hardened miscreants the sailors), in re- ng her *mea culpâ* of "Oh, fie!"

But as by this time I am sure Lady Laura must, like a second Cybele, have donned her tower of petrified barley-water, and be sailing about her rooms, either expecting or receiving her guests, with that indescribable air of prim bombast and starched foolscap so peculiar to her, and which Nelly designated "de card-boord dignity of a tragedy queen in a stage play," having for the reader's edification attempted to describe the Palazzo Vascello, it is high time that I should return to my Aunt Marley, in order to arrive with the rest of the company in state. One thing only I have forgotten to mention, which is, that the lower regions of the Palazzo were not only of infinitely smaller dimensions than its upper ones, but likewise so dark, as to entail eternal lamp-light. And woe to the vestal cook-maid, if she ever allowed it to go out! for the four flags, called the kitchen, were so torn with intestine commotions between rats, centipedes, beetles, and cockroaches, that the neutral party, consisting of the cook, Dermot, and the cat, were sure to have to fly for their lives from the fierce onslaughts of the belligerents; and in vain the fugitives complained to Lady Laura, and implored the redress of a surveyor, that they might see daylight through these civil wars.

Lady Laura only told them not to give themselves airs, when they were living in the very best "sittiation" in ——, for, strange to say, with all her philanthropy, she had some peculiar notions respecting servants and "common people," one of which was, that

like cameleons, they could live upon air (and also without it), and the other, that like empty packing-cases, they might be poked anywhere; the consequence was, that she and her domestics were always at issue upon these Poor Law Amendments, and though the board sat every day, the *Commons* were never agreed.

"Come, make haste, Lord Frederick," said my Aunt Marley to the former, who now appeared crossing the lawn with a bulky dark substance under his arm, about the size of a large hedgehog or porcupine, "make haste, or Lady Laura will never forgive us if we are late."

"I beg you ten thousand pardons, if I have kept you waiting," said he, as he got into the carriage, and took the package from under his arm, which turned out to be a small barrel in rosewood, capable of containing about a quart, "but here is the cause of my delay; I was obliged to lay in water at Cologne, as we are going on board Lady Laura O'Shindy's *Bucentoro* to-day:" and as he spoke, he drew a silver cork from the bung-hole of the little barrel, and inhaled a long respiration of Eau de Cologne.

"You d—d conceited puppy!" said my uncle, laughing, as he slapped Lord Frederick's hand with his own glove.

"Ah! it's all very fine, my dear Sir George, for you," laughed the young man; "you have never yet been there. All you know about it is, that it is over a gunmaker's shop, and the whole world are

aware that you are not afraid of the smell of powder. But only wait till you get there, that's all, and you'll have the goodness to let me know how you feel this evening."

It was quite true that my uncle never had had the misfortune of being in Lady Laura's palazzo before, but as he was going away, and this *fête* was to be the last, and she had made a point of his coming, and he never could bear to disoblige any one, however obliging them might put him out of his way, he had on this occasion accepted the invitation. Lady Laura was quite incapable of appreciating such a character as his; it was too real, too unaffected, too unostentatious. A person who never let his right hand know what his left hand did, who never talked fine sentiments, but was always doing fine actions, was quite beyond the comprehension of her tinsel and clap-trap nature, but as like most of your philanthropic levellers, she was a most indefatigable and servile tuft-hunter, and he was *the* great personage of ———, she was exceedingly anxious to have him at one of her gatherings, or rather to have it to say that he had been there; for she in herself appreciated, or enjoyed nothing beyond the degree she thought others would envy or esteem her for possessing it; the outdoing other people (as she thought), was her tariff of felicity in all things.

"Well, who comes with me?" asked my uncle. It was finally arranged that Mr. Waltham, my Aunt

Bell, and Grace should go in the carriage with him, and I with my Aunt Marley, and the two aides-de-camp.

"Now, Dapperwit, my boy," said Lord Frederick, "I know you are hard up, and I'll give you two ponys if you'll discover the meaning of any one thing the O'Shindy says to-day."

"Thank you, my dear fellow, you are very kind; but if you made it a hundred, I couldn't do it; in the first place, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and I suspect the meaning of anything Lady Laura says, is like the unfortunate gentleman's horse, which was difficult to catch, and worth nothing when caught."

My Aunt Marley being herself a beauty, all in joining in the laugh against Lady Laura's personal absurdities, always affected to defend her, and say it was too bad of people to laugh at her for her appearance; but when her philanthropy and philosophy were arraigned, then the thing became personal to herself, and she felt called upon to fight her own battles in defending her friend.

"Really," said she, "it is a great shame of you to ridicule poor Lady Laura as you do, for she is a most enlightened woman, and greatly in advance of her age."

"At all events her nose is," said Dapperwit, "for I never look at it without thinking of the story of the long-nosed Paisley weaver, who, happening to get a blow upon his proboscis one day, and having no court-plaster at hand, stuck one of his own gummed

tickets on the wound, which chanced to have written on it, 'warranted to contain three hundred and fifty yards!' Now, as 'good wine needs no bush,' so Lady Laura's nose does not require any such printed puff, for all who see it, feel quite convinced that it must at least be that length."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Lord Frederick, "the great puzzle to me is how so very ignorant, and thoroughly illiterate a person as she is, could have thought of getting into the 'blues!' for on no point can you take her that you don't find her in a perfect state of innocence, both as to the literature of the past and present day, so that talking to her is as arduous an exertion as wading knee-deep through a bog, or throwing a ball against a mud wall."

"You can't have everything," replied Dapperwit, sententiously.

"Everything! why what do you mean, Dapperwit?"

"I mean, my dear fellow," replied the latter, "that if Lady Laura is not *deep red*, her nose is."

"Really, you are too bad," laughed my Aunt Marley, throwing back her head, so as to show the profile of her own beautiful and delicately white nose to advantage.

"You have heard, I suppose, Mrs. Marley," said Lord Frederick, "that when O'Shindy applied for his Waterloo medal, it was at first refused, on the plea that they were only given to men of tried valour; the Captain fired, and swore that if undaunted bravery

could entitle him to it, he had better claims than any man in the army, not excepting the Duke himself, which assertion he said he had the means of proving; accordingly the next day he sent his wife's picture to the Duke of York; and the Commander-in-chief fully acknowledged his claims."

We were all still laughing at this story, when Lord Frederick, seizing his *eau de Cologne* barrel, and exclaiming, "Oh! Heavens above, and drains below, here we are!" sunk back as if fainting, as he added: "Have you got a fan, Dapperwit?"

"To fan your flame for Lady Laura, I suppose?" laughed the other.

"Profane youth, forbear!" said Lord Frederick, deluging his pocket-handkerchief with *eau de Cologne*. "Really, the woman ought to be indicted as a nuisance, for living in such a place."

"Her offence is rank, and smells to Heaven," said Dapperwit, with ludicrous solemnity, raising his right hand, and pointing upwards. Here the carriage stopped before the narrow passage leading to the odoriferous quay, in the centre of which passage Lady Laura's palazzo was situated.

"Dapperwit," said Lord Frederick, faintly, as the door was opened, and the steps lowered, "do your duty, and hand Mrs. Marley out. My dear Miss Miriam, pray assist me; I shall be happy to render you the same service at any other time, and in any other place."

"Come, Farnham," laughed Dapperwit, "or I'm afraid Lady Laura will discover a new organ in your head—the organ of Hang-me-if-I-can-ativeness."

"Perhaps," said I, laughing, and holding the barrel of *eau de Cologne* to his nose, "the barrel-organ may counteract its baneful effects."

"Thanks, sweet girl, as young gentlemen in genteel comedy say, when they kiss a piece of blank paper, with a yellow wafer in it, supposed to be a love letter," said he, kissing my hand. "Jeems," continued he, as soon as the former had helped my Aunt Marley to alight, "give me your arm. You should always give precedence to the weaker sex; lords first, and ladies afterwards."

Jeems was in one of those painfully-ticklish positions peculiar to his order, when footmen are perfectly riddled with random jests, and dare not retaliate upon one of them, even with the mildest smile.

My Aunt Bell, Grace, and my uncle, having also alighted, and the latter having involuntarily put his handkerchief to his nose, and exclaimed:

"God bless me! this is indeed terrible!"

"Ah!" said Lord Frederick, first pointing to my uncle, and then tapping his barrel,

> "There's a valiant fellow,
> They jest at perfumes, who never smelt vascello!"

Here a poor old woman, who swept the crossing opposite the Palazzo, held out her hand, and implored

his charity. "They say that charity covereth a multitude of sins. I'll try," said he, and flung her half-a-crown; but, missing his aim, the coin fell, and rolled on the pavement; but before the old woman could attempt to look for it, my uncle stooped down, picked it up, and gave it to her; for

> "Thus he bore without abuse,
> The grand old name of gentleman,
> Defamed by every charlatan,
> And soil'd with all ignoble use."

"May the Lord in Heaven bless your noble Honour," said the old woman, with tears in her eyes, more touched by his kindness than grateful for Lord Frederick's money. "Ah!" added she, "that was worth all the How-d'y-do's in the world."

This was an allusion to Lady Laura's daily benevolences, (which were about as beneficial to the people at large as Edward IV.'s), and to this old woman in particular, who swept the crossing, used to consist in the following amiable little monologue:

"Good morning, Ma'am." "A fine day, Ma'am." "I think we shall soon have rain, Ma'am; which will be all the better for your trade, Ma'am."

All of which, though exceedingly affable, and condescending in so great a lady, as Lady Laura considered herself, yet, with regard to the poor sweeper, was nothing more than so much waste palaver; for

as far as she was personally concerned, even the very smallest coin of the realm would have been of more use. But that Lady Laura, from the principle of the pernicious effects of relieving individual want, never gave.

It appears that like sin and sorrow, we arrived at the Palazzo at the very moment that Colonel Clavering, like a second Adam, was being expelled from Paradise, as Lady Laura called her charming abode, though I cannot say that Dermot looked the least like an angel, even an avenging one; for though he had his arms in his coat-sleeves on this grand occasion, and moreover had emptied the dredging-box promiscuously on his head, that on this auspicious day, at least, he might appear the *fleur* of footmen, yet had he retained his corderoys, and discarded what his mother called his yellow plush leg-shamers. Colonel Clavering (who, as Nelly said, was trying hard to pervert him to Calvinism) it seems had come to Dermot that morning to try to convince him of the wickedness of staying to attend his mistress's worldly and iniquitous gaieties, instead of coming up to Fort Goliah to prayers as usual; though, sooth to say, it was not the conventicle's spiritual delights that attracted him half so much as the spirituous pleasures of a pious public-house up there, called "The Eternal Perdition," and the sign of which was really a wonder, even for that peculiar branch of the art, as it consisted of a

large heart, surrounded by very fierce kitchen-fire looking flames, under which was encircled strange to say:

"ENTERTAINMENT FOR MAN AND BEAST.

"ALL KINDS OF SPIRITS NEAT AS IMPORTED."

But on this day, Dermot was not to be persuaded, either by threats or entreaties. "Sur George was coming," he said, "and he couldn't lave." From entreaties, Colonel Clavering proceeded to threats, and we arrived just at the interesting moment when the latter was assuring Dermot (with an earnestness that would have led one to suppose that he, Colonel Clavering, had received the information from private and undoubted sources) that he would to a certainty be d—d. Now instead of being grateful for the earliest intelligence, Dermot considered that the Colonel was becoming personal, and therefore taking him by the shoulders, and thrusting him out of the door, he said:

"Och, din, Colonel Goliah, wid de blessing of God! may be you'll de d—d first; at all events I cudn't tink of going before me betthers. So afther you, Sur, if you please; and as you same to be postmasther-gineral of the infarnel rajions, by all de sartin fax you do be continually recaving from dere, perhaps you'll just drop me a line, to say how you pass your time dere, only don't lay on de brimshtone too thick, as I

happen to have a particklar avarsion to de smell of it; and if it was bad smells I wanted, dere's plinty to chuse from here, and whin I say plinty, mind I only spake of de smells, for far be it from me to defame de plache by saying deresh plinty of anything elshe in it."

Having delivered himself of this oration, Dermot hastily wiped the back of his hand across his mouth, and preceded us up the creeking round-about, with such an irresistibly ludicrous strut, as much as to say, "you see I know how to do it;" that we all burst out laughing, having given our superfluous drapery to the attendant nymph, as Lady Laura would have called her, to place in the conservatory. Dermot flung open the opposite door, and roared out in the voice of a stentor:

"Sur George and de leedies."

And a minute after, as soon as he had given sufficient time for these sonorous sounds to boom through the rooms, not exactly knowing the aides-de-camp names, he again bellowed out:

"And de two sojer officers in feaders!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Lord Frederick, laying both his hands upon Dapperwit's shoulders, in a perfect convulsion of laughter, as they both retreated into the passage; "I cannot go any farther; I feel that the first shot has killed me; I bequeath you my sword, you may find it useful in cutting out the parrot's tongue, and my *eau de Cologne*, which will

be equally so in speaking to its mistress. Let my epitaph be:

> 'Here lies a sojer officer,
> Killed by a tay boy, and coffee, sir,'

for already I perceive the aroma of the chicory and horse beans: don't you, my dear fellow?"

As soon as they had had their laugh out, and laid several bets as to which of them would have the face to talk the most bombast to Lady Laura, they joined the procession, and entered the room. To describe the heterogeneous assemblage there collected, would be utterly impossible; but as they were chiefly composed of what Dapperwit called system-mongers, it may be sufficient to observe, that there was not that marked distinction existing between the hue of the gentlemen's linen, and that of their coats, which is generally supposed to be the characteristic of the line of demarcation between black and white; while nearly all the ladies looked as if they had been born before combs and brushes were invented: and when in point of *coiffures* there had only been birds'-nests and hay-stacks to set the fashions. Lady Laura advanced in all her dignity to meet us; while her sponso, who was as broad as she was long, and looked as Lady Laura should have wished to look, but never had, his whole appearance (with this little exception) was that of an amateur brigand: I say an amateur one, for notwithstanding his fierce display of beard and

whisker, and the innumerable curb-chains and rings he wore, yet he looked too pale and flabby for a real one; he was so much in the habit of laughing at, and playing off, his wife, that he had contracted a curious species of optical gymnastics in looking two different ways at once, and winking both eyes at the same time, which might be considered the germ of the electric telegraph of the present day.

"This is indeed kind," said Lady Laura, taking my uncle's hand, and retaining it within both her talons, which he bore like a hero, as he *was*, even to his valet-de-chambre! "I must introduce you, my dear Sir George," continued she, "to a friend of mine, who, I have no doubt, will be one of the greatest political characters of the day, the celebrated Put-me-in-your-place Eitherside: wonderful man! my dear Sir George: says everything is wrong."

"Without being a Solomon, I am rather of his way of thinking," replied my uncle, calmly.

"I know," resumed Lady Laura, "that your views are not quite so enlightened as his; he thinks that, politically speaking, the people ought to rule, and not be ruled."

"No, I confess I don't go quite so far, my dear Lady Laura, I only think with Vicessimus Knox, that 'the people should be at liberty to study politics, to read pamphlets, and to debate, if they choose, in debating societies.' The more they know of a good constitution, and a good administration, the better

they will behave. Ministers need not hire newspapers, or employ spies. Let them build their confidence in truth and justice, and the enlightened people will constitute its firmest buttress. Let it never be said that the people have nothing to do with politics, lest it should be inferred that such politics have no regard to the people."

"Oh, sure you don't think that they have?" said this ultra-liberal lady.

My uncle affected not to hear this question, for where there is not one grain of common sense, a whole bushel of reason would be only wasted. Strange, that in this universal philanthropy, the rats, cock-roaches, and short-commons of the home department, never once darted across her mind; but I suppose, like Erasmus, who in writing to the Pope to excuse himself for not observing any of the fasts of the Church, said "his soul was truly Catholic, but unfortunately his stomach was Lutheran," Lady Laura's theories were truly liberal, only unfortunately her practice was rather narrow and tyrannical, an anomaly that does sometimes occur, even in the best regulated philanthropists.

Having consigned my unfortunate uncle to the tender mercies of the patriotic Mr. Put-me-in-your-place Eitherside, Lady Laura turned blandly round to Captain Dapperwit, and as Dermot (assisted by one of the soldiers in plain clothes from Fort Goliah), was now handing a nankeen-looking fluid in coffee-cups,

and some red-herring splinters between brown bread and butter, which Lady Laura called Sardine sandwiches, and actually had the barbarity to press people to accompany by a sort of bottled cholera, that she denominated champagne, she now said to that young martyr in scarlet-cloth and silver-lace:

"Oh, Captain Dapperwit, won't you take a glass of champagne?"

"Champagne, indeed," growled an old gentleman, in black shorts and white stockings, with a very large pale conglomerated sort of face, with no other outline but that of a snout, relieved by a black bruisy-looking spot at the tip of his nose like an incipient truffle, in short, his whole appearance was that of a hippopotamus doing penance in a white mask. He was a dissenting minister, and had built one or two chapels of ease; nevertheless, the scandalous chronicle asserted that in his own house, as well as in those fanes, the mice had taken vows of poverty; and doubtless, it was this similarity of tastes that assimilated him with Lady Laura, as she was well known to be a great propagator of that peculiar species of lame mice, which on account of this infirmity are compelled to go upon crutches. "Champagne, indeed," growled this personage; "where are the grapes, Ma'am? gooseberries you mean, which you are trying to make fools of by calling them champagne;" for though this speaker's hospitality seldom extended beyond bread or water, yet he honestly called them by those names.

"Oh, fie," screamed the parrot.

"Oh, fie, Mr. Mundungus," said Lady Laura; "you see even Philomella is shocked at you for saying such things; and though I happen to like what you call gooseberry-wine, it is quite as dear as the other.'

"Fudge, ma'am," from the Reverend Noah Mundungus, while Lord Frederick *sotto voce'd* to his fellow-sufferer; "we are likely to pay much more dearly for it."

"I'm afraid you don't like brown bread, Lord Frederick," said the hostess, "but you know it is the orthodox thing with sardines."

"The greatest happiness of the greatest numbers," croaked the jackdaw hopping on the tray, which he nearly upset; but at the same time, humanely flying off with the last piece of mummied red-herring left upon the plate, which otherwise poor Lord Frederick might have been worried into taking.

"Not like brown bread!" cried Lord Frederick, now nerving himself desperately for the fray, and rushing into the thick of it, for fear Dapperwit would get the start of him, on account of their impending bets to fool Lady Laura to the top of her bent. "Not like brown bread, my dear Madam! I adore it. It always reminds me of Vaucluse, and you of Petrarch, as well as Laura. You remember his celebrated letter, in which he compares his dwelling to those of Fabricius and Cato—and so may you yours; and in which he also says—just as you may, and no doubt do

say: 'Here I war against my passions: I see only the sky, the water, and the rocks; nor gold,' (for gilding is not gold), 'nor precious stones, nor purple, nor ivory. The only female I see is a black servant, and she as parched and burnt as the deserts of Lybia. I hear only the asses bray, or the bleating sheep, the chirping birds, or murmuring waters. Having no one to converse with, I am silent from morning till night; the people solely occupied in the vineyards, or in spreading their nets,' (you see how applicable this is to the sailors of the men-of-war, beneath your windows, my dear Madam.) 'I know nothing of conversation, or society; I content myself frequently with the brown bread my footman eats.' Here, my dear Madam, is a most singular and striking instance of how the tastes and habits of great geniuses of all ages assimilate. Petrarch often ate the bread of his footman, and you, just five hundred and eleven years after, are addicted to precisely the same practices. Another strange coincidence is your *locale*, for near Vaucluse, the small town of Cavaillon is washed by the Durance; and here we are also in durance; and I need scarcely remind so classical and profound a scholar as doubtlessly Lady Laura O'Shindy is, that Titus Livius says it was the most difficult of all rivers to traverse."

"Oh! of course," pursing up her mouth, and fanning herself, "one knows all these things, only one forgets them."

"Do be quiet," groaned Dapperwit, nudging Lord Frederick, "or you'll kill me."

Here a deputation of Cookes and Abrahams came to beg for a song from Lady Laura, or at least an air on the harp (for Lady Laura was unmerciful enough to do both).

"Pray do, my dear Lady Laura," said Miss Leah Abraham; and in the energy of her entreaties, a large cabbage-rose fell from her bosom, which Captain O'Shindy hastened to pick up, and gallantly wished to retain, and transfer to his own botton-hole, but which the young lady insisted upon having returned to her, and replacing in her bosom; while the Captain executed coruscations of winks that were perfectly phosphoric.

"What shall it be?" simpered Lady Laura.

"It ought to be, 'Just like Love is yonder Rose,'" said Lord Frederick, pointing to the reinstated flower.

"Nay," whispered Dapperwit, "just like Lazarus, you mean, since it is again in Abraham's bosom."

No sooner had Lady Laura traversed the room, and placed herself at the harp, where from her exaggeratedly masculine features, she looked exceedingly like a Sternhold and Hopkins's Edition of "King David," an old gentleman in a bag wig (a great mathematician) was hastening to pay his compliments to her before the song began, when unfortunately his head touched the ceiling, and he set the stuffed Cupid swinging, who, out of revenge, kicked

off his wig, which however seemed to know when it was well off, and therefore quietly settled upon a branch of the paper ivy.

"What a pity!" said the eldest Miss Cooke (commonly called the Man-Cooke, who had no toleration for the freaks of Cupid, "what a pity that Lady Laura has not a fixed lamp to this very low room."

"D—d stingy old dust," broke in the parrot, while the lady so vituperated, burst into a tremulous squeak of—

"Just like love is yonder rose."

While Captain Dapperwit drew forth his tablets in a corner, and *improviséd* a very close parody beginning—

"Just like beet-root is yonder nose,"

As Lady Laura announced in another wirey twitter, that

"In the midst of briars it blows."

Lord Frederick whispered to his accomplice, who had nearly pulled him down upon one of the blue satin chairs, wreathed with roses and thorns:

"D—n it, Dapperwit, take care what you are about, or I shall do the same."

As soon as the song and the *obligato* plaudits were finished, Lady Laura, with even more than

her usual dignity, and mysterious importance, sailed up to me, and said:

"Miriam, my dear, I wish to speak to you in the conservatory."

I of course followed, and there being no curtain before the four panes of green glass above the door, Lady Laura, after locking it, seized a shawl, and securing it by means of pins, shut out any prying glances that might want to obtrude themselves from without. I began to feel alarmed, when Lady Laura bridling exceedingly, and her nose getting redder and redder, drew a paper from her pocket, and opened the session by saying with her mouth so pursed up that really the sounds could scarcely find room to issue from it:

"Ahem—ahem! I hope I need scarcely tell you, my dear Miriam, that I, as a married woman, would not even think of reading love verses, if I received them."

And to do Lady Laura justice, she was the very quintessence of personal propriety; for, as a French author has truly observed, "For women, good sense is a guard of honour; and ugliness a body-guard. This latter never sleeps."* And by this sleepless guardian had Lady Laura always been protected, even when the Captain had been bivouacking in

* "Pour les femmes la sagesse est une garde d'honneur, et la laideur une garde de corps; cette dernière ne s'endort jamais."

in the world, though out of respect to her
with difficulty suppressing themselves only
a century hence in posthumous fame, whe
portion of the creation at least might do h
adore without fear of tarnishing her Siberi
with the breath of scandal.

"This, then, my dear Miriam," continu
folding the paper, and placing it in my
merely a tribute to my *lit'ry* reputation. I
was pretending to ask a fisherman the pri
turbots he was landing on the quay thi
dropped it at my feet, for of course he dar
it me openly. I understand French and I
fectly to read and to speak, only I'm too la
them; but I don't understand French
poetry quite so well; so I want you to
translate these verses for me."

The scrawl upon the paper seemed stran
liar to me, and even the paper itself wore
an old acquaintance for it was a recent

So he was the timid adorer who pretended to bargain with the fisherman, and had dropped his trembling homage at her feet, which, nevertheless, very unsentimentally and materially ran as follows:

PREMIER SERVICE.

Potage printannière.
Soupe à la Reine.

HORS-D'ŒUVRE.

Petits pâtés à la Béchamelle.
Vol-au-vent d'Homard.

RELEVÉS.

Turbot, Sauce Hollandaise.
Saumon à la Chambord.
Filet de Bœuf à la Godart.

ENTRÉES.

Croutades truffées à la Milanaise.
Côtelettes à la Toulouse.
Poulets à la Ravigotte.
Ros-bif (!) Salade-Russe.

SECOND SERVICE.

Chaud-froid de Perdreaux.
Aspic de foies gras.
Pudding à la Chipolata.
Punch à la Romaine en Surprise.

Puits d'Amour à la Laura,
(dites à l'Italienne.)
Crême à la Vanille.
Macédoine de Fruits.
Chapon aux Cressons.
Alouettes au beurre de Montpellier.
Artichaux à la Barigoule.
Jambon de Westphalie,
au bain de vin de Champagne.

DESSERT.

Glaces.
Ananas.
Raisins.
Pêches.
Brugnons.
Gâteau Vénitien.
Reines Claudes à l'eau de vie.
Bavaroise au Chocolat.
Pièces montées.
Bonbons à devises.

——— V. (Chef.)

"Well, but you should'nt laugh, for that is very pert in a young person," said Lady Laura; "and you see there's my name," added she, pointing out the 'Puits d'amour à la Laura,' and I want to know what he says of me. It would be very impertinent to call me by my *Crissen* name (for so Lady Laura pronounced Christian name), only its always admissible in poetry, especially as O'Shindy is not a poetical name."

"They are not verses," said I, now with more difficulty than ever restraining my laughter.

"Not verses! then if it's prose, it's written in the oddest way I ever saw. But, at all events, tell me what he says, and which of my works he admires the most; for I see the word *hore-doover*, which I suppose is only another word for *cheff-doover*."

"Why, yes, I believe so," said I, now fairly bursting; "for Vatel considers all his *hors-d'œuvre chefs-d'œuvre*."

"And who is Vatel? Is he a poet, or a prose writer?" asked Lady Laura, "for I'm not so well acquainted with these modern French authors that have sprung up since the Revolution—so tell me which he is, Miriam."

"Neither," I replied. "He is only my Uncle Paulett's cook, and this is one of his bills of fare, which I suppose he dropped when he was ordering the fish from the boats this morning."

"Oh! the ojus, impertinent cretchur! to *dar* to drop his colyums (*Anglice*, columns) of cookery at my feet! Come, child, let us go back to the drawing-room; and be sure that you don't say anything about this ojus bill of fare, for Captain O'Shindy is so dreadfully jealous!" said Lady Laura, casting down her eyes all over her nose, which really did blush for her folly; "and having been in the commissariat, and therefore understanding all about provisions, he might suspect some foul play, and see more in this paper than meets the eye."

On returning to the drawing-room, to my great

few grains of gold amid the abundant d
dealt out by a Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbec
written a ponderous book as heavy as hin
the distribution of wealth, which, however, h
extinguished Adam Smith, nor expelled the
from the rotten core of society. In appea
Thesmothete Pinchbeck, the great political
of Lady Laura's literary and scientific syst
which he revolved like a bat round a coal-h
resembled a woodcock perched upon a hop-p
that woodcocks upon hop-poles don't dye thei
as this gentleman did, the few straggling ar
hairs that adhered to his poll, like one of
instances of faithful and pertinacious attac
sometimes sees evinced by the few-and-fa
bristles of an old hair-broom.

But, few as Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck'
adornments were, their variety of hue and
endless; and when he stood between two li
reflections were perfectly prismatic. He

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which looks "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," no doubt reminiscences of all the bubbles of life that have burst around it in the shape of soap-suds and the continual hot water it has been kept in; these trousers, unfettered by the despotism of straps, were very wide at the ancles, and always

"Floating free as mountain breezes."

Mr. Pinchbeck's ancles were curiously slight, and his feet cased in very thick-soled, unpolished leather shoes, with tremendous bows and ends of cotton-tape ties, as curiously large, displaying like a guinea-fowl above them his speckled black-and-white worsted stockings; such, with the sleeves of his coat invariably too short, thus making his long, skinny, claw-like hands appear still longer, was Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck's unchanging costume; being exceedingly near-sighted, he wore glasses, attached to a round piece of black-worsted cord, like that used for the pulleys of window-blinds, and strange to say, though he had written so much upon the distribution of wealth, not a single grain of either gold or silver seemed to be patronized by him, for his eye-glasses even, were set in block-tin, which considerably added to the grotesqueness and ourang-outangishness of his appearance; and as he was in the habit of taking pulmonic lozenges (as well as writing pulmonic essays), some young wags had sent him a large oval block-tin *bonbonnière*, not unlike a

metallic warm plaster, and as the city of Cork had the honour of claiming this great political economist as her son, they had the following couplet inscribed round it, being a parody on Dryden's

> "Charronæn Plutarch, to thy deathless praise,
> Doth martial Rome this grateful tribute raise!"
>
> "Corkonian Pinchbeck, to humour thy queer ways,
> Doth grateful Tin this humble tribute raise!"

The two distinguishing traits of the great Thesmothete's conversation were, that holding up the two forefingers of his right hand levelled like a pistol at the face of the person he was addressing, he always prefaced every fresh sentence with the extraordinary, and one would think, superfluous interrogation of "Do you see me now?" while at the same time his discourse was so confused with entangled parenthesis, that it was impossible ever to disentangle it, or get back to the original point from whence he had started; for instance, it was a common thing with him to commence with a tirade against one of Lord Castlereagh's speeches, and from thence to diverge into a badly-aired flannel-waistcoat, which brought on a fit of illness that required change of air; till finally he lost his way about the streets of Canton, leaving Lord Castlereagh all this time to "*stand prostrate*" at the feet of any nation he pleased, which that statesman had so eloquently declared he would never see England do.

Luckily, however, Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck, also, had a trick of haranguing with his eyes tightly shut, so that sometimes at the end of an hour, or an hour and a half, when charmed with the deferential silence with which he had been listened to, suddenly opening his eyes, to obtain ocular demonstration of the effect he had produced, he had the great, if not exactly pleasing surprise of finding that he had not a single auditor left, and that all this time he had not even been casting pearls before swine, but worse still, wasting his wisdom on the winds. Of all his victims, poor Dr. O'Donnell was the one who suffered the most from him, because he took him *au grand sérieux*, which one should never do a bore, but always make of them that amusement which they are in themselves incapable of contributing to society; in short, one should play the bee and not the spider to them, that is, divide the arduous task with nature, as in the case of Lord Brougham's nose, which she has made ridiculous and ungainly, but from which all the world, nevertheless, derive a constant and unflagging source of amusement and delight, which is more than they are likely to do from his other absurdities.

But instead of pursuing this wise course of self-preservation, poor Dr. O'Donnell, when compelled to listen to the great Thesmothete, by my Aunt Marley or any of the reigning powers, used to sit groaning and turning up his eyes, or else feeling Pinchbeck's pulse, and muttering in an audible aside, which, with his

north of Ireland Scottish brogue, was irresistibly ludicrous.

"Augh, poor divil, he's gitting worse, and worse."

"Augh, what on earth are his relations about, or has he none? that for the credit of the famly they don't club together to provide him with a decent retreat in some private asylum, where he'd be humanely treated, and given four good bare walls to talk to, that he couldn't injure, and that would listen as long as he liked."

When we returned to the drawing-room, Mr. Pinchbeck being in possession of the platform, as many as it could contain, had taken refuge in the back-room, while the rest had rushed to the balcony, preferring even tar to twaddle; so that poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, with the bore-proof good breeding of her country, was the only martyr who had remained at the stake, with the exception of Dr. O'Donnell, who said he staid professionally, as it was not right to trust a sane person alone with a madman. While Pinchbeck on his side, with a ragged sort of splinter-of-block-tin-gallantry, which he had endeavoured to infuse into his bearing, ever since he had fallen a victim to the personal attractions and philosophical views of my Aunt Marley, and being unable to die himself, to prove the extent of his devotion, had adopted the less desperate *mezzo termine* of dyeing his hair. Pinchbeck on his side, I say, who possessed, in a strong degree, that Anglo fallacy, that the French were a frivolous people,

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h; "for when I was with the poor

instead of which they happen to be *the* most profound people in the world, as they have fused in the subtile crucible of their wide intelligence, and coined for a general circulating medium in their initiative mint, the rough and unuseable ore of German metaphysics; thus creating a floating capital of intellectual wealth, equally adapted to the inexhaustible demands of the millionaire thinker, or the small current barter of conventionalities, which constitute the daily exigencies of society's superficial wants.

But let this pass; Pinchbeck was one of those ancient Britons, who lost in the fog of his own profundity, took the frivolity of the French, nationally and individually, for granted; so that just as I returned, he was actually floundering into an attempt to talk toilet to Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; but, as I suppose, he thought that costume, like charity, should begin at home, he had selected his own coat for the experiment.

"Do you see me now?" he commenced, as Dr. O'Donnell, in a stage whisper, turning up his eyes, and joining his hands as if in prayer, groaned, as he turned his head on one side:

"Augh! indeed, for our sins, in these d——d parties of O'Shindy's ridiculous wife, one seldom sees anything else."

"Do you see me now? though I actually went to the expense of a new coat to come here to-day; that fellow of a tailor, I do believe, has made it crooked."

"Augh!" again groaned the Doctor, suddenly seizing Pinchbeck's wrist, and feeling his pulse, which was conveniently bare for the operation; "as long as the waistcoat could be but straight, that's all you require, my dear fellow."

"Do you see me now? it's actually higher on one side than the other."

"The elevating principle should always be maintained," chimed in the jackdaw.

"Oh, fie!" screamed the parrot, as Pinchbeck, in his twitchings and pullings, made a false grasp, and missing his aim, suddenly separated his waistcoat from his trousers, as completely as Harry the Eighth separated the Anglican church from that of Rome, and, by this means, left his waist apparently doing penance in a white sheet.

Poor Pinchbeck, thus put to his shifts, gave up dress as an unlucky topic; while Mademoiselle de Guilleragues turned away to hide the laughter she could no longer suppress, but infinitely more amused at the Doctor's lachrymose gravity, and the expression of misery and despair in his face, than even at the great Thesmothete's disasters. The latter, however, now determined to make a total change, leaped from coats to petticoats, and asked her if when in France, she had been personally acquainted with Madame de Jongly? as he called Madame de Genlis.

"No, I was not," replied Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, with a sigh; "for when I was with the poor

dear Princesse de Lamballe, her Majesty, Marie Antoinette, would never receive Madame de Genlis; 'Je ne souffrirai pas, disait-elle, que Madame de Genlis me soit présentée; d'ailleurs je n'aime pas les beaux esprits qui font de la morale écrite, et de l'immoralité en action;'* and as I am also of her Majesty's way of thinking, I never sought Madame de Genlis's acquaintance."

Here Captain Dapperwit came sauntering into the room, with his pocket-handkerchief on active service, muttering, as he tottered in from the balcony: "Who can touch pitch without being defiled!" and then proceeded to hover round Pinchbeck, looking leisurely and carefully over him from head to foot, and from foot to head.

"Are you looking for anything?" said I, also obliged to retreat behind the great Thesmothete, for fear he should see me laughing.

"Yes," said Dapperwit; "I am looking for the label. All the animals at Exeter Change and the Tower are labelled, and very properly; for unless one was a Linnæus, a Cuvier, or a Buffon, how the deuce is one to know all the different names of the infinite varity of the baboon genus?"

"I remember," said Mademoiselle, speaking in

* "I will not allow Madame de Genlis to be presented to me; for, indeed, I do not like your clever people who write morally, while their actions are immoral." In plain English, poor Marie Antoinette had a just contempt for mere fine sentiment-mongers.

French, that Pinchbeck might not know that he himself formed the interesting topic of conversation, "that the year before the revolution broke out, all Paris was taken in by a hoax played off upon the credulity of the good Parisians; it was placarded all over the town, that on the Boulevard du Temple was to be seen a most extraordinary *lusus naturæ*, the offspring of a carp and a rabbit. All the world flocked to see it, but all the world were invariably told, that they had arrived at a *mal-à-propos* moment, for that the interesting progeny happened just then to have been sent to pay one or two visits, in the Faubourg St. Germain, to a brace of dowager duchesses, and an invalid *jeune comtesse*, who could not come and pay their respects to it; but the father and mother were both at home, if the visitors liked to see them; as both the rabbit and the carp, being of a social disposition, received all day long. Now, I really think," continued Mademoiselle, laughing, "that *ce brave homme*," looking slyly at Pinchbeck, "must have had an ourang-outang for his papa, and a woodcock* for his mamma; surtout, puisque les races se féminisent."

"Not the least doubt of it," laughed Dapperwit; "the mother is a true bill, and as for the father, thereby hangs, or at least hung, a tail; for I should think Pinchbeck *père* must be defunct long ago. Oh!

* A *bécasse*, or woodcock, in French, means also a silly woman—as we say, a goose.

murder!" cried he, suddenly backing almost into the wall, as if precipitately escaping from imminent danger; "here comes the tay boy and the centurian again; really, Doctor, you ought to remonstrate with Lady Laura for distributing your prescriptions gratis!"

"I beg, Captain Dapperwit," said the poor Doctor, as he turned with a groan from Pinchbeck to a cursory survey of the wonderful contents of the two salvers, "that you won't libel my salutary prescriptions; for I never administer poison, but in an orthodox form."

"Ah! I see how it is," said the other, laughing; "you play into each other's hands. Lady Laura manufactures maladies for you to cure."

"That's it," said Dr. O'Donnell, laughing, "only," added he, glancing at Pinchbeck, "it is taking an unfair advantage of me to smuggle in incurables."

"Do you see me now?" said Pinchbeck, seizing a glass of foaming gooseberry, and altogether launching into a most anacreontic and profligate sort of *laisser aller*, "there is nothing like women and wine."

"Fair play," cried Dapperwit; "I protest, Mr. Pinchbeck, against your monopolising both; it is contrary to all the rules of the distribution of wealth."

"Do you see me now?" blinked Pinchbeck, "a bird in the hand."

"You mean," interrupted Dapperwit, "a glass in the hand is worth all the nymphs in my eye, including the fair Elizabeth Martin, eh, Mr. Pinchbeck."

"Do you see me now? I'm not up to the pranks of

you young chaps, but will you pledge the lady of your love?" and Pinchbeck tendered another glass of the raging gooseberry (as Dr. O'Donnell used to call it), to Dapperwit, which, however, eventually found its way down Pinchbeck's own throat.

"Heaven and all the saints forbid!" cried the aide-de-camp, with a look of pious horror as he started back. "I hope my principles are too firmly fixed for me ever to attempt to commit suicide."

"Perhaps this grape-shot is more in your way," said Dr. O'Donnell, pointing to some little small dusty black grapes with their sear and yellow leaves appended to them, to show that they had once actually been on a vine, which vine grew outside the conservatory-window, and having the full benefit, not only of the morning sun and dust, but also of all the smoke rising from the fires used for melting pitch along the quay, was fairly worried into putting forth its fruit two months sooner than any other vine; but like all infant prodigies, these grapes never grew into anything great afterwards, except in Lady Laura's mouth, when she talked of the grapes of her conservatory being the most forward in the island.

"Shall I give you some?" added the Doctor.

"No, I thank you, my dear Doctor," said Dapperwit, turning them over with the end of his scabbard, "I never take my wine in pills."

While Dr. O'Donnell was still laughing at this

sally, and Pinchbeck had at the expiration of five minutes, actually discovered all by himself, and totally unassisted, that wine-pills were a very good name for grapes, Lady Laura advanced, and said in a very mysterious and solemn manner to Captain Dapperwit, "that she wished to speak to him upon a matter of importance; but as it shall never be said that I was seen *tête-à-tête* with any man but Captain O'Shindy, Miriam, my dear, come with us," said she.

I began to wonder if she was going to take another opinion upon the bill of fare, while Dapperwit stammered out "te—te; thank you, my dear Lady Laura, for there is safety in numbers;" and, at the same time, he slyly drew his sword, and carried it behind him in the most ludicrous manner possible, as grasping my wrist he followed Lady Laura, making his hand shake and his teeth chatter, as if he had the ague, or was half-dead with fear, which sent me off into such convulsions of laughter, that Lady Laura was obliged to turn round and inform me that:

"Nothing made a young person appear so like an idiot, as those extraordinary sort of laughs without the slightest provocation to mirth, in which I was always indulging."

"Very true, my dear Madam," said Dapperwit, solemnly, "in this, as in all else, you evince your profound penetration. I can only suppose, Miss Miriam, that you are laughing at me, which, allow

me to tell you, is extremely ill-bred; for, however I may ambition the smiles of your sex, not being Mr. Pinchbeck, I feel I am not entitled to the laughter."

"Pinchbeck is indeed a most superior man," said Lady Laura; "but though," added she, screwing up her mouth into what she thought a most irresistible and encouraging smile, which she stuck into the very centre of the poor aide-de-camp's eyes, "you may not equal him in his own particular line, yet don't despair, perhaps there may be ladies willing to smile upon you, too."

Dapperwit now began to look seriously and unaffectedly alarmed; while Lady Laura preceding us into the conservatory, again locked and curtained the door.

"Miriam, my dear," said she, "you can stand in that corner with the carpet-broom, and you need not listen to what we are saying."

This strange preliminary speech, Lady Laura thought the quintessence of diplomatic astuteness, for she was never satisfied with painting her transparencies in the most glaring colours, till she had also set a light behind them to show how cunningly all the points were devised. Had she been a diplomate, and compelled to write in cypher, she would have written long explanations of each hieroglyphic, stating, that she had resorted to enigmas, in case the despatch should fall into the enemy's hands, but enclosed the key for the benefit of her correspondent; in

short, she was full of art about everything, but all her arts, as the French say, to express clumsy deceptions, were *cousu de fil blanc*, (sewn with white thread); the Spartans were quite right to punish such bunglers; fraud is one sin, but detected fraud is a double sin, and holds the same degraded rank in the moral scale that vulgarity does in the social; for vulgarity has been happily defined as unsuccessful affectation, and fashion as successful affectation. No sooner had Lady Laura made this speech, than Dapperwit, while she was still more hermetically sealing us by closing the conservatory-window, said to me:

"My dear Miss Miriam, you will bear witness that I was entrapped to my fate, and that I died bravely, sword in hand!"

Lady Laura had told me not to listen, but she had not forbidden me to hear, when she left me enacting the part of groom to the witches'-steed, *alias*, standing up in the corner by the broomstick in the conservatory; accordingly, I am enabled to put the reader in possession of the following edifying conversation between her and Captain Dapperwit.

"A-hem! you are aware, Captain Dapperwit, that custom—that is, a barbarous state of civilization—has condemned women to the painful, and sometimes impossible task of concealing their sentiments within their own *boosums*; but I,"—and here she cast down her eyes, and hesitated; while Dapperwit looked

actually rabid, as he hastily glanced from the door to the window, and saw both closed; "but I," continued Lady Laura, "think that friendship may, without impropriety, surmount this barrier; and I cannot think so ill of you, notwithstanding that you belong to the blood-thirsty profession of *legal butchers*," she emphasised the words, "as to suppose that you would wantonly tamper with the sensibilities of the female heart, by affecting a tender passion that you did not feel; and in vain I have tried to shut my eyes; I could not but perceive, how compromising your attentions, nay more, your every look has been."

"Nonsense!" cried Dapperwit, now springing to the door like a tiger at bay; "I am willing, this very moment, to run Captain O'Shindy through the body, or blow his brains out, if he has any, to convince you and him, that I never even looked at you, when I could possibly avoid it."

"Me!" interposed Lady Laura; "oh, no—no man has ever presumed to bestow illegal glances upon me since I have been another's. I was not alluding to myself, perfectly assured, that whatever the internal struggle of your feelings might be, you would never dare to express them."

All the time most energetically re-assuring Lady Laura upon this point, Dapperwit got into such a dreadful fit of laughter, at the idea of the ridiculous mistake Lady Laura's harangue had led him into, that he was some seconds before he could say:

"And may I take the liberty of inquiring to whom you *do* allude?"

"I would know," said Lady Laura, folding her arms, giving her mouth an additional screw, and infusing a little more saltpetre into her face, so as to bring her whole bearing a few degrees further below freezing-point, "what your intentions are towards my sweet young friend, Miss Leah Abraham?"

"My intentions!" gasped Dapperwit; "I have none—none, upon my honour. Lady Laura, pray assure her that I never even intend to ask her to dance again, if that will satisfy her and you."

"No, Captain Dapperwit, it will not. I was alluding to nearer and dearer ties. Do you intend to propose for her, for I know she intends to accept you, if you do?"

"She is very kind—too kind, in fact," said Dapperwit; "but unfortunately those nearer and dearer ties, as you justly call them, my dear Madam, are much *too dear* for a poor devil like me to indulge in; as unfortunately, notwithstanding Mr. Pinchbeck's immortal work upon the distribution of wealth, I have only my pay to live on."

"Well," said Lady Laura, with one of those ineffably placid smiles, which she always assumed when she sapiently (as was her wont) smoothed a difficulty by an impossibility, "Leah has nothing either; so she is not mercenary; and surely it is better to live on

your pay than not to pay for what you live on, as so many do."

"Ah! but the reason so many do the latter, my dear Lady Laura, is, that it is a deuced deal easier to do than the former; and I don't live on my pay, for I couldn't do it—it merely finds me in claret and pipe-clay, when I'm obliged to dine at the mess, and in perfumes and note-paper, when I'm on the staff; and you, who know everything, my dear Lady Laura, must be aware, that all statistics have gone to prove, that pap-boats, in the long run, are infinitely more onerous than pipe-clay; and that marriage is too expensive a mess for any man under a field-officer to get into. Besides, though the little Dapperwits might be fortunate enough, thanks to your kind exertions, to be able to boast of having 'Abraham to their mother,' yet not having him to their father, I really don't know how they would get on: therefore, though greatly flattered by your fair friend's having given me the refusal of her hand, I cannot repay the obligation by affording her an opportunity of accepting mine."

The impertinent fatuity of this speech, all-glaringly assumed as it was, conveyed even to Lady Laura's obtuseness some faint idea of how she had compromised and degraded her friend—all in intending to render her an essential service.

"Pray, don't go and suppose," said she, bridling and reddening, and now trying to get as clumsily out of the scrape as she had got coarsely into it; "don't

for the world imagine that Leah, the most modest and retiring of human beings, knows anything, or has the least suspicion that I intended to speak to you on this subject."

"Why, I thought," interrupted Dapperwit, enjoying the scrape Lady Laura had got herself into too much to let her off so easily, "that I had understood your ladyship especially to state, that it was Miss Leah Abraham's obliging determination to accept me, when I proposed for her."

"Oh, dear! how you take one up, and put one down, just like a lawyer: I merely meant that I was sure—that is, that I thought—Leah would not refuse you, if you asked her to marry you; and I really thought you had some regard for her."

"I have so much," said the young man, assuming quite a different look and manner, "that I am most truly grieved that I should (though unintentionally) have been the means of Miss Abraham's name being made so unpardonably free with. I can only hope, Lady Laura, that you will never let it get to her ears, and I give you my solemn word of honour, as a gentleman, that I will take care it never gets to anybody else's; and I am sure, Miss Miriam, you will also give me your word never to repeat what you have just heard, which was only a jest of Lady Laura's, a very bad one, I grant, as all practical jokes are. You are now growing up yourself, and in a very few years more you will understand that a woman's name is of

too delicate a texture (or at least should be so) to be discussed as a matter of barter, or sale, like any common merchandise; so now I beg of you to do by Miss Abraham as you would that others should do by you; that is, never injure or degrade her by an incautious word: for, for one injury that malice prepense, or cruelty inflicts in this world, carelessness hurls twenty."

I promised faithfully, and liked Captain Dapperwit from that day, though he never fulfilled his original intention of becoming my uncle. Lady Laura, however, who like all fools was too vain of her cleverness, notwithstanding the flagrant blunders it was always making, and the signal disasters it was ever entailing, to rest till she had trumpetted her wonderful efforts to get her friend married; for did she only open or shut a door in behalf of another, she expected to have an annuity of thanks settled upon her, the dividend payable every three minutes in the day. So, accordingly, she lost no time in seeking poor Miss Abraham, and impressing upon her the urgent arguments she had used to persuade Captain Dapperwit to make her an offer; and that he would have done so, but that he had not money enough to marry.

The result of this flattering communication was, that the poor girl, her pride stung to the quick, and her sense of delicacy outraged, went into violent hysterics, which at all events had the good effect of breaking up the party, as my Aunt Marley conveyed

her home, and I went in the carriage with my uncle, who desired the coachman to cross the bridge, and return home by the other side of the river. Every one had now left the Palazzo Vascello, even to its master, who had occasion to personally give some orders to a pretty little French milliner, who lived two or three streets off, touching the hemming of some pocket-handkerchiefs; so that Lady Laura, Mr. Pinchbeck, and Philomella, alone lingered in the balcony, inhaling apparently with infinite complacency the mosaic of atrocious odours wafted up from the quay, which Lady Laura called the salubrious breezes from the river.

Just as we were opposite to her window, on the other side of the bank, a tremendous explosion took place, loud as the blasting of a rock, or springing of a mine; and in another moment, we saw Lady Laura and Pinchbeck blown up into the air, and then fall apparently unhurt upon the deck of a vessel, while Philomella, who had escaped from the crumbling balcony, seemed to consider Pinchbeck as the author of the catastrophe, and wreaked her vengeance upon him accordingly by flapping her wings, pecking at his forehead till it bled in divers places, and screaming vigorously on his head, till one of the sailors at length got her off.

We, of course, instantly turned back, and found that Dr. O'Donnell, Lord Frederick, and Captain Dapperwit, at the noise of the explosion, had done the same. The accident, it appeared, had originated in

a spark falling upon some gunpowder in the shop. A plank having been laid across, we were all soon on board the vessel that had so fortunately received Lady Laura, and the companion of her flight. She was pursing up her mouth, sighing and groaning, with her head first at one side, and then on the other, trying hard to faint, but quite unable to manage it, while Pinchbeck was staunching the blood that flowed from the wounds "the envious Poll had made!" exclaiming, "Do you see me now? this is terrible;" while Dr. O'Donnell was executing a sort of tesselated pavement of patches of square and oblong pieces of court-plaister round his forehead, which by no means added to the beauty of his appearance.

"Rather too much of the elevating principle; eh, Lady Laura?" said Dapperwit, as soon as he had ascertained that she was none the worse for her aërial excursion.

"My dear Mr. Pinchbeck," remonstrated Lord Frederick, with ludicrous gravity, "I hope you do not insist upon it as a universal principle in your distribution of wealth, that it is expedient to go off with other men's wives. I had no idea you were such a flighty person."

"Dapperwit," said my uncle, "go round, and see if any one is hurt in the house: O'Donnell, you had better go with him," he then added, turning to Lady Laura, "As you perceive, it is not safe to live over gunpowder; and, indeed, I should say that altogether

this was not a healthy situation. I hope, after this accident, which might have ended fatally, that your Ladyship will remove to a more airy quarter of the town."

"Remove? oh no! thank you, I think I am in the very best sita-ation in ——, indeed I take it as a personal offence if any one even hints to me that they think otherwise; for to attack my house makes me feel as the martyrs of old felt when their religion was arraigned, and besides my love of the beautiful towers above everything, even above danger; and look," added she, first pointing to the muddy river, and then to the dusty tops of the trees at a distance: "Just look at the exquisite combination of wood and water that I have here. Oh, no! no change for me, it is decidedly the best sita-ation in ——."

My Uncle shrugged his shoulders, took a pinch of snuff, (which he must have found a great comfort in that odoriferous sita-ation,) and said nothing, for Lady Laura's infatuation about the horrible hole in which she lived was beyond the pale of common-sense.

Captain Dapperwit now returned, bringing the distressing intelligence, that poor Dermot had been killed, that Mr. Trigger, the landlord, had lost two fingers, but his wife and servant being out at the time, as well as Lady Laura's cook, they had all escaped.

"Poor Dermot," said my uncle, "or rather his poor mother, how on earth are we to break it to her?"

'Really," said Lady Laura, folding her arms with most stoical philosophy, and stretching out her ; horizontally, with a most masculine air, as was wont, "I don't think there is anything to fret ut, we should think ourselves very lucky that it is y one of the servants, for the explosion might have en place when we were all in the drawing-room; l as for Misther Trigger, (for Lady Laura when ite at her ease, and not doing English, always said sther, sisther, and lobsther!) it will make him re careful I hope, for the future."

While this eminently philosophical and benevolent ly was still speaking, to my infinite delight and rprise I saw Dermot in *propriâ personâ*, leisurely vancing along the quay in his shirt-sleeves, with e side of his face much blackened, and a black mass ing across his left arm.

"Why, here is Dermot," cried I.

"Yes, here I am, Missh, at laste as much as is lift me, for I hadn't time to stay, and luck if I'd picked yself all up complate; bad look to it for a hornet's st, sure blowing up was de fittest ting for it, only y should have let Christians get shut of it fust."

"What on earth is that you have hanging on your m, Dermot?" asked his mistress.

"Which? is it dis shupply of tinder? Shure, don't ou see, Ma'am, dat it ish rags just; but if your eedyship wantsh to know what it wash, it wash my very; och! murder, a terrible blight of de buther-

cups. I hope it won't affict de milk and crame any how?"

There is nothing more revolting than one of the concentrated and masked rages of a mock placid person; an honest fit of passion explodes and is over, but these mild martyr tempers are always practically illustrating the fiendish maxim, that the art of dissimulating is the art of vengeance. At this news of the demolished livery, Lady Laura looked red, white, green, and yellow, all in the same moment.

"You will leave my service instantly, sirrah!" said she, screwing up her mouth even to unusual tightness, lest otherwise the living flames should issue from it as from the mouth of a volcano. "I always *bid* you take off your livery the moment the company went; you know I don't care what coat you have on, or whether you have any coat at all when I am alone; your conduct is unpardonable, quite unpardonable; there ought to be a law enabling one to imprison servants for such wanton and careless destruction of one's property; get out of my sight, your wages shall be sent to your mother this evening, with an account of your scandalous conduct."

"Why, thin, indade my Leedy," said Dermot, scratching his right ear, "if I wash to have tuck off my livery ivry time I was blow'd up, sorrow a taste of it I'd iver have had to my back, for shure it was blowing me up all day long you wash, and how wash I to know dat it wash an ixtra blowing up in rale

arnest I wash to git to day. Howivir, yer humble sarvent, Ma'am, ash I am to go, and at all ivintsh, dere's won advantage in laving your Leedyship's sarvice, which ish, dat itsh an unpossibility to go furder and fare worse."

And thus terminated Lady Laura O'Shindy's last *fête*. I could not help wondering all the way home, in my youthful ignorance of the world, that so great a philanthropist as Lady Laura, should have borne the intelligence of a fellow-creature's death so stoically, and yet have been so utterly beside herself at the loss of her servant's livery. Time has since solved the enigma, thanks to philosophy; the former did not cost her a single pang, whereas the latter had cost her—a few pounds!

CHAPTER IX.

If one could but jump certain epochs of one's life, as one has the option of doing in their narration, what a blessed thing it would be! But no: in Life's preparatory school, Necessity is the usher, and Fate the rigorous master, that never lets us off of a single difficulty. We must either conquer them, or take the consequences of not doing so. A hard school, truly! where there are few prizes, and fewer holidays. But, courage! let not the dullest, or the most buffetted amongst us, despair; for we know that the breaking-up will come at last, when we "shall arise, and go to our Father," and then, if we have but profited by His lessons, we shall thank the hard Master, that has fitted us for our eternal home.

On the day that we left ———, and once more embarked in 'The Ocean Pearl,' the sky looked un-

usually grey and gloomy. There are often these sort of kindly sympathies in Nature, for frequently her tears mingle with ours over the newly-made grave, and as frequently her brightest smiles light up some bridals, while she weeps prophetic torrents upon others. It would indeed have been unkind in the sky of ———, usually so clearly blue, and cloudlessly bright, if it had not now looked sadly down upon us, when, for the last time, we looked so sadly up to it, oh! for the last time! It is a moral cestus of Venus, which bestows beauty upon everything, even to the Palazzo Vascello! Distance was beginning to "lend enchantment to the view."

The whole population of ——— had turned out, and thronged the beach and the pier. My uncle was not to return there, as the appointment was to be given to an officer of inferior rank, and the salary to be considerably reduced; but had the people of ——— been following his funeral, their silence could not have been more profound and mournful, or their tears have flowed more copiously. There is nothing in seeing women, children, and beggars cry, for tears are at once their vocation and their heritage here below; but when stern-visaged, strong-hearted men weep, the course of nature seems overruled, that feeling may be avenged, and one is awed before the miracle, as the Eglonites and Amorites were before the sun and moon, when they stood still in the Valley of Ajalon! My uncle seemed equally affected—perhaps more

painfully so—for it is a great charge for one heart to have to respond to thousands; but if ever heart was broad enough, deep enough, and true enough for the task, his was. He cordially returned the pressure of the hands within his reach, but uttered not a word. Oh! well and wisely, I ween, are things meted out, for how would half the world ever express their small ideas, and smaller feelings, but for great words? and how would great and intense feeling ever be expressed but for silence?

It was not till 'The Ocean Pearl' had weighed anchor, and had rounded the point of the bay, that one unanimous "God bless you, Sir George!—God speed you!" burst upon the air, as if from the lungs —ay, and the heart, too,—of a giant, and white handkerchiefs fluttered in all directions, as if there had been a battle of the angels, and their mutilated wings had fallen in mid-air. My uncle stood with his hat off till the yacht was out of sight, when I saw him press his handkerchief to his eyes as he turned away to go down to the cabin. I was about to follow him, when Mademoiselle de Guilleragues touched my arm.

"Don't!" said she. "Full hearts, like large vessels, require much room. They are always best left for a short time to themselves."

Usually, ——— from the sea, looked, with its white houses, and gilded vanes, like Aphrodite at her toilette, robed in white, with a sapphire girdle of blue waves; but now a mist was rapidly rising, and

shrouding the island like a veil, as if the very earth and sea were sighing forth their *adieux* in a thick and troubled breath.

"Pauvre île!" said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, as she leant over the side of the vessel; "elle a l'air d'une sœur grise ce matin."

This voyage was a melancholy one to all parties—even my aunts had subsided into a dead calm. My uncle looked harassed and anxious, and, being still busied with papers and accounts, which seemed to diffuse a poisoned atmosphere around him, as if they had been upas leaves, he seldom came on deck before sunset, which was, consequently, the happiest hour in the four-and-twenty to us, for "coming events" began to "cast their shadows before," and Grace and I felt that vague, enigmatical sadness, which each new page we turned of after-life only too fully solved.

Home!—that is, the first cradle-home of our childhood—is a sanctuary guarded by household gods, with whose fidelity not even the omnipotent Fatum itself can tamper, and as long as we remain within its threshold, and look from thence upon the outer world, all seems light and bloom, or if a transient cloud does flit over the distant view, it is sure to have a silver lining, ever ready to turn upon the crowd of our own hopes.

But from the very first step we take without this sacred threshold into life's dread arena beyond, our own shadows fall upon our path, darkening it as we

advance, and placing a fearful odds of untangible incertitude between us and our assailants; or even if we retire from the contest, and, like Diogenes in his tub, hug ourselves within the precincts of our own hearts, letting Imagination's bright, prismatic tints touch into glory all our ideal prospects, still, there is always some insolent Alexander of Reality! coming to stand in our sunshine. Mademoiselle de Guilleragues was too happy at the idea of returning to her own country again, after so many years of exile, to feel as sorry at leaving us, as we felt at her going; besides, after my Aunt Marley's return from Ireland, we were also to go to Paris, and she was never tired of planning all we were to see and to do, and, above all, the long evenings we were to have with her in the Rue du Bac,—in short, "Les Veillées du Château" were to be nothing to them! But to us, the idea of the six or eight months that must elapse before we met again, seemed interminable, and, indeed, half that period is a sort of spurious eternity, if one has to pass it either in grief, pain, or regret. Upon the whole, the only really happy person "in that small craft upon that world of waters" was Mr. Waltham, for not only was he about to see his mother and sister, of whom he was exceedingly fond, but the dream of his life was about to be realized, for Lord Frederick Farnham had got his father, Lord Plantagenet, to return him for his close borough of Gammonboor.

As the royal road to happiness is the making others

appy, Lord Frederick himself was in high spirits, ut I am sorry to say had very little mercy upon poor aptain Dapperwit, who looked, as Lord Frederick xpressed it, like Don Quixote run to seed; and, to ay the truth, the comparison was not much exagge-ated, for the once spruce aide-de-camp now appeared erribly crest-fallen and woe-begone: the cause of his affliction was this. Thanks to Lady Laura O'Shindy's friendship and diplomacy, she had not only sent poor Miss Leah Abraham home in violent hysterics from her last charming *festa*, but had so vaunted her own friendly zeal and arduous endeavours to get Captain Dapperwit to marry her, that she had made her friend the talk and laughing-stock of ——, notwithstanding Dapperwit's honourable entreaties that she would be silent on the subject: the consequence was, that the poor girl had become seriously ill from shame and vexation. This was very hard upon the hapless aide-de-camp, who had taken every pains to prevent it, and who was not the least in love with the ready-made victim Lady Laura's delicacy and discriminating tact had consigned to him.

Though somewhat of a fop, Dapperwit was by no means devoid of good feeling; and even had he been originally hard and selfish, I defy him to have lived for six years in close intimacy with my uncle, and remained so; for high and noble hearts are moral loadstones, which can raise even the most sordid and iron natures to their own level, by the irresistible force of

attraction and attachment. So the very morning of our departure from ——, half an hour before we embarked, Dapperwit had screwed his courage to the sticking-point, and written a formal proposal to the young lady, requesting she would forward her answer to him in London, at Cox and Greenwood's—how romantic!—letting him know whether he was to be the happiest or most miserable of men; for such is the orthodox form of those missals (and love-letters are always official, when they are not overflowing from the heart): however, as Voltaire truly says,

"Toujours un peu de vérité se mêle au plus grossier mensonge."

And this obligato phrase of making him the happiest or the most miserable of men, like oracular answers (from those of the Cumean Sibyl's, down to the Vicar of Wakefield's to his wife, when, during a curtain-lecture, that good lady would extort from him his opinion touching the relative value of Squire Thornhill's attentions to their daughter Olivia) might be taken either way; being, according to the wishes of those most concerned, equally applicable to both of the events—whether the *pro* or the *con;* and consequently it was because Dapperwit feared that Miss Leah Abraham would consent to make him the happiest of men, that he went about looking the most miserable, as Lord Frederick said.

As for Nelly, though decidedly less savage in the aggregate, she yet preserved a sufficiently porcupine

demeanour towards her slave and servant Jeffs, to remind him, that on board the 'Ocean Pearl' at least, he was only the boatswain, and not the master.

With regard to my aunts as nothing could exceed the *empressement* and civility of the custom-house functionaries at Southampton, and the hotel people were equally cap-in-hand (as they always are to a good harvest in the shape of a large suite), it was not till they had arrived in London, at the gloomy hotel in Jermyn Street, where we put up, that they began to feel that moral cold-water shock which first informed them that they were mere ordinary mortals, and not the greatest people in the world, as they had hitherto been in their own estimation. But London, like love, (except that love is all flame, and London all smoke); but otherwise, London, like love, levels all distinctions, and many a brilliant star that shone out in a provincial, or a provisional hemisphere, arrived amid the misty nebulæ of the giant city, is obliged to bid "a long farewell to all its greatness!"

Men, however, are never to be pitied for returning to London; for even when they have been playing amateur kings, as ambassadors, viceroys, or governors-general, still London is their real focus, being the place, *par excellence*, of their favourite haunts and associations, to say nothing of the club-windows, where, as Nelly tersely and graphically expressed it, "dey look for all de world like a set of shtuffed birds in glassh-cases;" and however ornithologists may

dispute as to the birds, of the stuffing there is not the least doubt.

Well, thanks to his old friends, and his old haunts, my uncle for a time threw off his care-worn look, and my aunts were too busy preparing for their journey to Ireland, to feel either *ennui* or the change of their position; so that Grace and I were the only really-miserable people of the party; for we had lost everything, and gained nothing. Nelly had gone to her snuff-shop in Fleet Street, which, as she truly said, was no place for us to be coming to; and if it had been, how were we to get there? Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had departed for the delights of the Rue du Bac.

We were to be sent in a day or two to what my Aunt Marley considered a very fine school, because it was a very expensive one, at a Miss James's, at Kensington; and consequently *pro tempore*, we had no governess, neither was there that profusion of carriages, and servants, we had at ——, and the one pair of job horses, that this part of the establishment had now dwindled down to, found ample employment in my aunt's shopping by day, and parties by night; and had my uncle not had his saddle horses, he might have been as badly off, for air and exercise, as we were; it is true Lord Frederick had brought his two younger sisters, Lady Fanny and Lady Lucy, to see us. And very charming girls they were; and we had passed one happy day with them amid lawns and flowers at Lady Plantagenet's villa at Twickenham.

But what new acquaintance can ever replace old ones in young hearts? And once or twice during the day we had passed at Twickenham, we felt as if we had been guilty of some vile piece of treachery towards poor Bloom Belzoni, and the O'Donnells, because we had caught ourselves being happy without them. Lady Paulett and Fiametta had also called, and taken us out to drive once or twice; but I can't say that it was very amusing to sit in the carriage for hours while they were paying visits. So that, for the most part, my aunts being unable to take us out, unless one of them, and one of us remained at home (the carriage being a chariot) our miserable time was spent in migrations, like perturbed spirits, from the large gloomy drawing-room to the still more gloomy bed-room leading out of it, and looking upon high walls, and dingy leads, where the few faint sunbeams from a London sky had no chance of penetrating, with the fearful odds against them of fog, soot, and smoke.

At length, the last day of this bastile life arrived, and even the idea of going to school, detestable as it had at first been, was a relief as a means of getting out of this bondage; besides, at fourteen and sixteen, we were no longer children, and, therefore, at school might fairly anticipate the privileges of grown-up girls, privileges which my aunts were by no means inclined to award to us; so had not the thought of leaving, even for a short time, our dear, good uncle hung like a dark cloud over all, it would have been a

blessed reprieve to feel that this was the last day we should pass at the hotel in Jermyn-street. My Aunt Marley was out, and had taken Grace with her, leaving word, however, that she should be back in an hour, as Mr. Grattan was to call; he had been my poor mother's god-father, of which her sisters were very naturally not a little proud; and as I was very anxious to see this great man (for I have an infinite admiration for *really* great men, though no respector of heroes in general, or runner after celebrities, merely because they are such), I asked my uncle, who had remained at home to write letters, if I might stay in the room when Grattan came.

"To be sure, darling," said he, "and I can promise you a good scene, unless he is greatly improved since yesterday; for I've been drilling him for the levée on Thursday, for the last week; and up to the present moment, I cannot get him to do anything, but tumble over his sword. I am afraid he'll end, despite all my exertions, by falling at the Regent's feet."

"It ought to be *vice versâ*," said I; "Grattan being so immeasurably the greater man of the two."

"I quite agree with you, Mirry, and except perhaps a score or two of his Royal Highness's tailors, I don't think any one would attempt to dispute that fact."

My uncle then went on writing, and I, with a heavy sigh, took from my bosom, and began reading for the twentieth time, since her departure, poor

demoiselle de Guilleragues' last gift in the form of
et of maxims in verse, which I shall transcribe.
body is obliged to read them; I only wish to
even that every one was obliged to act upon
m, and then, though we might have less talk in
world, we should have more truth and honesty.

Rendez au créateur ce que l'on doit lui rendre,
Réfléchissez avant que de rien entreprendre.
Point de société qu'avec d'honnêtes gens,
Et ne vous flattez pas de vos heureux talens.

Conformez-vous toujours aux sentiments des autres,
Cédez honnêtement si l'on combat les vôtres,
Donnez attention à tout ce que l'on dit;
Et n'affectez jamais d'avoir beaucoup d'esprit.

N'entretenez personne au-delà de sa sphère,
Et dans tous vos discours tâchez d'être sincère,
Tenez votre parole inviolablement,
Et ne promettez point inconsidérément.

Soyez officieuse, complaisante, douce, affable,
Et pour tous les humains, d'un abord favorable:
Sans être familier, ayez un air aisé;
Ne décidez de rien qu'après l'avoir pésé.

Aimez sans intérêt, pardonnez sans faiblesse;
Soyez soumise aux grands sans aucune bassesse:
Cultivez avec soin l'amitié d'un chacun;
À l'égard des procès n'en intentez aucun.

Ne vous informez point des affaires des autres;
Sans affectations dissimulez les vôtres:
Prêtez de bonne grâce avec discernement;
Quand il faut récompenser, faites le noblement.*

Et de quelque façon que vous vouliez paraître,
Que ce soit sans excès, et sans vous méconnaître,
Compatissez toujours aux disgrâces d'autrui,
Supportez ses defauts, soyez fidèle ami.

Surmontez le chagrin où l'esprit s'abandonne,
Et ne le faites pas rejaillir sur personne.
Où la discorde règne, apportez-y la paix;
Et ne vous vengez point, qu'à force de bienfaits.

Reprenez sans aigreur, louez sans flatterie;
Riez passablement, entendez raillerie;
Estimez un chacun dans sa profession;
Et ne critiquez rien par ostentation.

Ne reprochez jamais les plaisirs que vous faites;
Et mettez-les au rang des affaires secrètes:
Prévenez les besoins des amis malheureux;
Sans prodigalité rendez-vous généreux.

Modérez les transports d'une bile naissante,
Et ne parlez qu'en bien, d'une personne absente;
Fuyez le nom d'ingrate, soyez reconnaissant;
Et songez, qu'être ladre, n'est pas être prudent.

* I fear the dear Whigs of the present day—those disting incapables—distinguished, above all, for their parsimony a breeding—are too old and incorrigible to benefit by this max else they need it most sadly.

Parlez peu, pensez bien, et ne trompez personne;
Et faites toujours cas de ce que l'on vous donne:
Ne tyrannisez pas le pauvre débiteur,
Pour vous, comme pour lui, soyez de bonne humeur.

Au bonheur du prochain, ne portez pas envie;
Ne divulguez jamais ce que l'on vous confie;
Ne vous vantez de rien, gardez votre secret,
Après quoi—mettez-vous au-dessus du caquet.

lthough I was not at that time aware that the line was the most difficult, not to say impossible, ıese maxims, I was still pondering over it, till nally lulled by the monotonous creaking of my e's pen as it moved rapidly across his paper, I ed my eyes from the window that looked into the street upon the duller people, and plunged into of those waking day-dreams, the golden portals hich memory so hospitably opens to us, as a ge against the desolation or the inclemency of often insupportable epoch—the present!

vas again back at dear ———, bounding through esh, balmy, elastic air, free and buoyant as the waves that kissed its shores, at one moment ıing to the legendary murmurings of their rip- tide, at another inhaling the delicious perfume s flowery meads and haunted dells, which were Coleridge's description of

"Boccaccio's garden, with its faëry,
The love, the joyance, and the gallantry;
An idyll with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
Framed in the silent poesy of form."

There was a certain picturesque old rope-walk, on one side of which ran a little brawling vagabond rivulet, famous for its smooth pebbles, bright waters, and green cresses; and at the end of this walk was an old-fashioned bosquet or charmille, composed entirely of pink and white May, which flowered so luxuriantly in the season, that the birds, bees, and butterflies, seemed actually intoxicated with the delicious mareschino odour of its flowers; and this charmille led into a meadow, which in the spring was a rare and lovely specimen of nature's most exquisite enamelling.

The rope-walk, the rivulet, the charmille, and the meadow, had been our favourite haunts as children; and poor Bloom Belzoni used always to say, that amid the soft airs and sweet perfumes of that most lovely bosquet she should like to live and die. Is there such a thing as second sight? or does the electric fluid of certain thoughts act as spells upon the invisible and impalpable denizens of the spiritual sphere by which we are always surrounded, and compel them to raise for a moment the impervious and mysterious veil that shuts out their world from ours, and remove the adamantine barrier Omnipotence has placed between the present and the future? I know not; but this I know, that at that moment, I beheld as distinctly as the instant before I had seen the smoke-dried houses on the opposite side of the street, Bloom Belzoni lying on a perfect bed of that beau-

tiful purple Brazilian flower, the *Flor de Queresmo*, of which, in the whole island, her father possessed but one solitary plant; the beautiful May of the charmille blushed, and breathed above her, while she looked scarcely less radiant or less happy.

At her feet knelt Philip Vavasour; her hand was clasped in his, their eyes were rivetted on each other: neither spoke: and yet it was as if their hearts lit up the place, there was such a glow about it. The very birds were silent, as if in mute ecstasy; they seemed to listen to the flowers, whose voiceless words made each passing breeze vocal with sweet airs; in short, it seemed as if happiness, breathless from her rapid flight from the pursuit of mortals, had stopped to rest one moment in that lovely spot, and all nature paused to do her homage; but in vain, she would not stay: she never does, for her home is not on earth. But as the deadly sirocco whirls desolation across the desert, so darkness suddenly fell upon this fair scene; Belzoni, like an incarnate simoon, appeared at the other end of the charmille, lowering fearfully on the pair. Philip started to his feet, and fled into the meadow: passion, as I had once before seen it, convulsing every feature of his fine face; while the purple flowers, upon which Bloom was lying, suddenly became white as snow, as if they had grown grey with one great grief, as when sorrow gets the start of time, and withers up young hearts before they have well opened to life's few summer hours.

Next, the fair girl herself faded visibly away, and the sunbeams, which till then had wooed the fresh leaves, like Jove in golden showers, were now changed into ghastly grave-lights, and flitted round the couch upon which I had so distinctly seen the form of Bloom Belzoni an instant before. I pressed my hand to my eyes to shut out the horrible vision, but a faint scream escaped me.

"Heavens! my dear child, what is the matter?" said my uncle, hastily rising, and coming over to me; "I'll send for Halford immediately," added he, about to ring the bell.

"No, don't!" said I, keeping him back; "it's nothing; I shall be better in a minute: I'm quite well now."

"Where are you in pain, my child; you look so pale: you had better let me send for Halford?"

"No, no, dear uncle, I am not ill."

"Not ill! then what made you utter such a piercing cry just now?"

"You would laugh at me if I told you."

"Laugh at you!" said he, drawing my hand towards him, and kissing my forehead: "am I then such an ill-natured old fellow as to laugh at anything that pains or annoys my poor little Red Boots?"

"No, that you are not, only you might think Red Boots a goose."

"Well, I hope I'm at least capable of saying bo! to her if I do," said my uncle, laughing; "so tell

me, darling, what it was that made you scream just now?"

I then related the vision I had seen.

"My poor child," said my uncle, feeling my pulse, "I am afraid the confinement of these last two weeks has made you ill and nervous. "I suppose," added he, ringing the bell, "we can get a job carriage here; and after Grattan has been here I must go out, first to Phipps about my eyes, which have pained me terribly for the last week, and then to hunt for a house; after which, Mirry, we'll take a drive into the country."

"Hunt for a house! why I thought, dear uncle, you had one in Berkeley Square?"

"Yes, I had one, but I have been obliged to let it; and, as beggars must not be choosers, I must now content myself with a small house in some dingy street," and he sighed heavily.

"Oh! don't say you are a beggar!" said I, bursting into tears, and throwing my arms round his neck.

"At all events, Mirry," he replied, trying to look cheerful, as he put back my hair with both his hands, "I'll be a sensible one, and never ask for what the world has not to give—charity!"

Here the waiter entered in answer to the bell.

"Oh! pray, can I have a job carriage!"

"Certainly, Sir George."

"Then be so good as to order one to be at the door at two o'clock."

"Very good, Sir," and the man withdrew, while

my uncle (no doubt wishing to preclude any further conversation upon his own affairs), turned to the table, and resumed his writing.

Madame de Staël says, it is terrible to be condemned to celebrity, without the power of being known. It would be terrible if the world's opinion—which is nine times out of ten founded upon false premises—was either worth grieving about, or exulting at; but there is another predicament infinitely more terrible, which is, when we cannot explain ourselves to ourselves—when our feelings, like rebellious subjects, regicidically turn upon the sovereign mind, and overthrow that which should rule them. In these internal, as in all other civil wars, it is easier to see and suffer from the wrong, than to check or repair it. My mind was now in this dethroned state; I was so helplessly buffeted by the anarchy of painful and conflicting feelings, that I could neither control nor explain, though habit is most unquestionably second nature, and the vulgarities of poverty are as revolting to a refined and cultivated taste, as vicious conduct and conversation are to a virtuous mind.

Yet, I hope I was neither so narrow of heart, nor so shallow of intellect, as to fret upon my own account, because I had so suddenly begun to exchange the purple, gold, and fine linen of life for its delft and huccaback. No, thank Heaven! in this, my first grief, I was free from the leprosy of selfishness. It was of my uncle, and my uncle only, that I thought.

Golden hearts should be set in gold, or else they become powerless. Wealth in his hands had been what it should ever be, but so seldom is,—a lever lent by God to man, to enable him to raise any weight of misery, and so lighten the fearful burdens from which so many groan, and would otherwise die. Of all the luxuries that wealth can purchase, human happiness is the most costly; and no doubt it is upon this account that even the richest people are so prudent, that they seldom invest much capital in this species of treasure; for the mighty of this world prefer, like Cicero, irrigating their laurels with wine, and yet, should there be a horticultural display in Elysium, they may be surprised to find that those only which were watered by the tears of gratitude have flourished greenly on into immortality.

Amid all the vague torture I was enduring relative to my uncle's altered position, one idea at least stood out tangibly and distinctly, and upon that I now cast the anchor of my doubts: if he were so poor, why were we sent to so expensive a school as Miss James's? for my aunts had not failed to reiterate that £300 a-year was to be paid for each of us, and though I had not, it is true, very distinct ideas at that time of either the positive or comparative value of £600 a-year, and upon that very account, perhaps, the sum appeared to me even greater that it was; yet a further knowledge of Miss James's "Establishment" rather augmented and confirmed my ideas of its mag-

nitude than diminished them, for it certainly was a most enormous sum to pay for learning ignorance and vulgarity, which were the only things thoroughly inculcated, because the only things thoroughly understood and practised, in the aforesaid "Establishment."

At one moment, I was on the point of ending this painful perplexity by throwing my arms round my uncle's neck, and imploring him not to incur this additional expense upon our account; but I was deterred the next by the idea that not only my doing so would be attributed to my own dislike to the notion of going to this school, but from the still stronger one, that all appeals were useless when once my aunt's fiat had gone forth; for I fear, had they wished to burn the house, my poor uncle would not have opposed them,—so unsoldier-like a dread had he of war! What should I do?—or, rather, what could I do to combat all this impalpable evil, and at least save my uncle expense, if I could not resort to the far pleasanter, and more expeditious course of re-filling his coffers? No one ever was more learned in faëry lore than I was, but in this first knotty dilemma of actual, positive, work-a-day life, in vain I explored its most occult archives. Alas! all they did for me was to make me regret that there were no such things as fairies; if there had been, oh! how soon that dear, care-worn face opposite to me—so calm in its resignation—so kind even in its sorrow—should have been made radiant with joy! I was still

ıg in that gloomy window, building cloud palaces, lining them with the sun, when the door was ın open, and Morden announced:
Mr. Grattan, Sir George."
t this time Grattan was much bent, for it was only years before his death. He generally walked with ıands behind his back, and his eyes bent on the nal, as if intensely pre-occupied by some en- ıing thought—as, indeed, he always was—for n, during the course of a long, glorious, and con- nt career, a man has had a whole people in his t, and a whole country in his head, as Grattan he has most indubitably sufficient matter for occupation. Why is it that in this age of rapid ress, and universal diffusion of knowledge, when llect is homœopathically irrigated with intellect, ave no giants, as of old? The secret is this: not that there is less capacity, nay, nor even genius, but that there is less—or, rather, that e is *no* sincerity: formerly, men's opinions *were* , and they fought for, and defended them, with same dauntless and uncompromising courage ı which they would have defended their individual ı. From this deep and pure source of Reality ng that noble truth, Patriotism. Like that of alry, the *name* still exists amongst us, but the is extinct. And what wonder? For what could ; most atrocious maxim, which is the pivot of lern politics, namely, that " the chief aim of legis-

lation is the protection of property!" give rise to, but a race of trading politicians, so shamelessly venal, that they are only rendered innocuous from being contemptible?

What made Burke open his doors to Crabbe, and know that the home that was large enough for one was large enough for two?—Sincerity. *He felt* the philanthropy he professed: it was the necessitous *man* he welcomed, not the *rising poet*. And what made Lord Erskine turn a deaf ear even to the urgent letter of appeal and introduction Crabbe brought him, but that *he lacked* this *reality* of nature, and belonged to that dawning faction of cliqueism which has been the all-blighting upas of the present era. He turned from the distress of the man, because he ignored the embryo fame of the author. For both of them fate kept the unities. Lord Erskine became Lord Chancellor of England, eloped to Scotland in the appropriate costume of an old woman (would not his chancellor's gown have done as well?) and wrote a novel!* Burke shook the senate with his eloquence, and riveted that eloquence in his essays; he also expounded "The Sublime and Beautiful," and he did well, for

"They best can paint them who have felt them most!"

But to continue, for to go from Burke to such a man as Grattan is less a return than a continuation;

* "Armata."

hat with his white hair and his fragile appearance, e illustrious apostle of Catholic Emancipation gave e the idea of a silver-ash; but there was a genuine pression of benevolence in his eyes, and a delicacy in e chiselling of the nose, that seemed to bear tes- mony to the former beauty of the face; it is perhaps, edless to say, that the inflections of his voice were eculiarly melodious, for who can be really an orator ithout that organ being attuned to the most correct rmony? As well might one attempt to convey an lea of the beauties of Mozart and Beethoven upon an strument out of tune, as to hope that even the most rilliant and profound ideas, clothed in the choicest nguage, can constitute oratory, if nature has been a iggard, and withheld a good voice; they may indeed ecome silent eloquence reduced to paper, but can ever attain to that high standard, spoken with a lefective enunciation, or harsh intonation.

"Ah!" cried my uncle, starting up to receive his ld friend, and shaking his fore-finger menacingly at im, "woe betide us if we have not got our lesson etter to-day."

"Oh! to-day, my dear Paulett," said Grattan aughing, as he shook him by both hands, "even if you die of envy I shall expect you to acknowledge that I am a finished courtier."

"Not you," said my uncle, laughing; "the stuff is not in you, you'll have to content yourself with being weighed by posterity in the humbler scales of patriot-

sm and eloquence, for I fear we shall never make a courtier of you."

"Bless me, how like poor Miriam," said Grattan, now perceiving me for the first time, as I stood up upon his approach to the window.

"Ah! poor thing, it is her youngest daughter," replied my uncle.

"In that case," said Grattan, holding out his hand, and at the same time kissing me, "I have credentials to prove that I am entitled to a kiss, for I was your poor mother's god-father."

"At all events you are entitled to the love and admiration of the whole world," said I, returning the kiss with a *con amore* energy that I am sure would greatly have shocked Miss Squiggins, and every other *British female!*

"You must not be surprised, my dear Grattan," said my uncle, "at receiving compliments from this young lady, for I assure you no one does more justice to your speeches, whether in reading or appreciating them; only take care," added he, laughing, "that she don't become your rival, for I assure you we are no contemptible orator ourselves."

"Indeed, I perceive," said this dear old man, with a gallantry that was charming from its amiability, "that I shall have a most formidable rival; for what is the use of my wasting my breath in advocating Catholic Emancipation, and inveighing against the Slave Trade, when she will be going about the world

enthralling all classes, and making more slaves than a whole wilderness of American and West Indian planters put together."

"Bravo! spoken like a courtier," cried my uncle. "Now I begin to have some hopes of you; but there's nothing like striking while the iron is hot," and so saying, he rang the bell.

"There, I told you," said Grattan, laughing, "that I'd force you into owning to-day that I was a finished courtier."

"Not so fast, my dear Sir, your honour is at stake, so that must be proved at the point of the sword. Oh! Morden, be so good," added he to the latter, who now answered the bell, "to get some one to help you to bring a boot-box, or an imperial here, and bring down one of my foils and a sword-belt. Ah! now," laughed he, offering his snuff-box to Grattan, "that we come to cold steel, the courtier don't seem quite so confident."

"I should think," said I, "Mr. Grattan must be too much accustomed to foils to mind them."

"Well turned," cried my uncle: "there, Grattan, you are paid for your slaves."

"Only in giving myself for a hostage, I fear," bowed he gallantly. "Talking of things being well-turned, have you heard Bushe's last? it is very neat."

"No," said my uncle; "pray, let us have it; for *bon mots* are the very reverse of birds, and

one in the *bush* is worth two in anybody else's hands."

"Last March," resumed Grattan, "when the gentleman of the Leinster Bar went on circuit, you must know that amongst them was a certain Mr. Cæsar Colclough. Well, I need not remind you that there is a wide and dangerous arm of the river Nore at the ferry of Ballinlaw, which must either be crossed, or the traveller must go a round by the bridge! but on the evening in question, there had been a terrific storm; the river ran mountains high, the ferry-boat was leaky, the boatmen irresolute, and foreboding evil; so that these distinguished members of the bar, preparing as they were for hanging, naturally wished to escape drowning, and therefore prudently resolved to make for the bridge, with the exception of Cæsar Colclough, who, with the indomitable courage of his illustrious namesake, resolved to cross the ferry; and so taking his saddle-bags under his arm (for they contained his fortunes), he gallantly flung himself into the crazy boat, and off he went. His affectionate colleagues, standing silently and mournfully on the shore, breathless with anxiety, while Cæsar, like his prototype, at once buffetted and defied the billows: one moment they saw him on the summit of a wave that seemed to lash the very clouds, while the next he was totally submerged. In this stage of affairs it was that Bushe, picking up a pebble and a piece of slate from the beach, wrote this epigram, which indeed has the

additional, that is, the professional merit of supplying a kind of contingency with a double aspect; if he perished, it would have commemorated his death; if he survived, (as he did), it celebrated his triumph.

> "While meaner souls the tempest struck with awe,
> Intrepid Colclough cross'd at Ballinlaw;
> And thus, to cheer his shiv'ring boatmen, brags,
> 'You carry Cæsar —— and his saddle bags!'"

"Capital!" cried my uncle.

"Yes, it's so terse," said Grattan, "not amplified and diluted, as Lucan has done the original in his 'Pharsalia.' You, of course, have heard his *mot* about the Duke of Richmond?"

"No; I have been so long out of the country, that I have heard nothing," said my uncle.

"I need not tell you that the Orange party call all of us, who are in favour of Catholic Emancipation, Papists. One day, during the Duke of Richmond's Viceroyalty, we were dining at the Castle. After dinner, as the night waned, and approached the small hours, the Duke as usual was under the table, and would have been nearly suffocated, if we had not extricated him.

"'Come,' said Lord Clonmell, 'bear a hand, Bushe.'

"'I shall do no such thing,' he replied; 'for were I found assisting at the *Elevation of the Host*, you would then indeed have reason to call me a Papist.'"

We were still laughing at this sally of the Chief

Justice's (or rather at the Solicitor-General's, as he then was), when Morden returned, bearing in, assisted by one of the waiters, an imperial, which was placed at the upper end of the room, a cloth table-cover spread over it, and an arm-chair then put upon it; after which the servants withdrew.

This was the *mise en scène* for one of the Prince Regent's levees. My uncle, taking the *grand rôle* of the Regent (and a most colossal roll his Royal Highness was at that time), and Grattan personating the whole court, which after all was not so arduous an undertaking for him, as it might have been to many, considering that he was a host in himself. After the girding on of the foil, and an impressive drilling as to the manner of his progress towards the throne, my uncle turned to the glass to complete his own toilet, which he did by taking off his black neckerchief, and rolling a whole bale of white muslin round his throat, till it looked enormous; and then, in order to imitate the Regent's hyperion and luxuriant wig, he ran his fingers through his hair on each side; but as he wore his own hair with powder, and had not yet discarded the tail of the last century, his hair only stuck out like two enormous white wings, and looked so grotesquely ridiculous, that it threw us into convulsions of laughter.

"Well, my dear Paulett," said Grattan, "as soon as you have done ineffectually aping your betters, I'm ready to begin paying my court to them."

When my uncle had done laughing too at his own pearance, and had put down his wings, he seated nself right regally on the mimic throne, and looked very inch a king."

"Now!" said he, giving the word of command. Grattan began to move, but not calmly, with quiet gnity and self-possession, his head erect and his step m, as he had been told to do; but darting forward ith long strides, as if he had been pacing the room measure it, his hands from habit behind his back, d his head and eyes bent towards the ground.

"D—n it, man!" cried my uncle, "hold up your ad. Surely no one had ever more reason to do so an you."

Grattan recommenced. This time he threw his ad back as if he had been taking pills—and indeed was undergoing a course of *steel*—for in another oment the foil got between his ankles, and all but ipped up his heels.

"Well, 'pon my soul, it's too provoking," said my ncle, starting up, and laying his hand upon his arm, prevent his falling; "who could ever suppose that is was our modern Pericles, who has 'the Goddess 'ersuasion on his lips?'"

"No, no, my dear Paulett, I shall be quite content f you rank me with Cicero and Demosthenes, and ou know they were both very deficient in action."

"But I don't rank you with them, I rank you bove them; for they both contended with their peers,

but you have no equal, at least in the senate, so don't go, and disgrace your country at a paltry levee. Quintilian is right, the countenance is of very great power in all we do; and it is difficult to say what a number of motions the hands have without which all action would be maimed, and lame. Remember, too, my dear fellow, the story Tacitus tells us of Vibulenus, the *ci-devant* actor, who when a common soldier in the Pannonian garrisons, merely from the eloquence of his action (for the speech has come down to us, and has nothing in itself) stirred the whole army to mutiny by the narration of the fabricated death of an imaginary brother whom he had never possessed; and you, who possess so much of this eloquence of action in the House of Commons, why cannot you bestow a little of it upon Carlton House?"

"I suppose it is," said Grattan, simply, "because I always have a point to carry, or want something in the one House, while in the other I want nothing."

"I beg your pardon, you'll want incessant watching," laughed my uncle, resuming his seat. "Ahem! attention!" said he, in a drill-sergeant voice, whereupon Grattan, in order to guarantee himself against any further harpooning from his sword, now held it tightly behind his back.

I could not help laughing; and not a little proud of showing that I really did read his speeches, and what was more, understood and remembered them, I said:

"My dear uncle, you frighten one: recollect Mr. Grattan has not been used to live under a stratocracy."*

"No," laughed my uncle; "perhaps he prefers petticoat government, now he has got you for his champion, Mirry."

The rehearsal then recommenced, I am sorry to say without any visible improvement on the part of the illustrious Tyro, though it lasted about half an hour, till the pupil was obliged to sit down from exhaustion, and the teacher was ready to cry with vexation that his exertions had not been more successful.

"The fact is, my dear Paulett," said Grattan, as he ungirded the foil, and flung it from him on the sofa, with that degree of joyous eagerness with which one always repudiates a plague of any kind, "the fact is, I cannot pay you so bad a compliment as to mistake you for the Regent; but you'll see, when I am in the real presence of his illustrious peruke, I shall do wonders."

"Not you; you'll never be a proficient in the royal game of goose."

Here the carriage was announced, and the old friends took leave of each other with an *au revoir*,

* This word, which means a military form of government, though has since found its way into all Dictionaries, was then one of Castlereagh's coining. He had issued it from his rich verbal mint in one of his latest speeches; the one which may be said to have crowned up the history of this illustrious statesman to the summit of human eminence.

Grattan giving me another kiss. I never saw him again, but "the man is little to be envied," says Johnson, "whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon; or whose piety would not grow warm amid the ruins of Iona." And in like manner, the heart would be little to be envied, upon which even the briefest contact with the really great, that is the *genuinely good*, did not leave a track of light through all its after-life; for Fourrier is right, "*Les attractions sont proportionnelles aux destinées;*" and however humble their exterior position, and however bitter and adverse their worldly fate, those natures which feel the magnetic influence of high and noble minds, have still a happy and a glorious destiny, of which no temporal vicissitudes can deprive them, a city of refuge within, which brings them nearer to God, as it weans them further from earth, like to the monasteries of old, before they had degenerated into the hiding-places of crime and the haunts of profligacy, which were retreats of learning, civilization, and charity. So a heart, peopled with pure memories of the great and good, is to its owner a sanctuary from the dreary ignorance, coldness, and persecutions of the outer world, wherein, despite all human shackles, may be indulged the *deambulatio per amena loca* amid revels at the rich feasts of the generous past, however the shallow and niggardly present, like a Whig ministry, may withhold even the smallest reward from the greatest merit.

os of the poor dear Whigs of the present day; y be considered the Aragos of politics, keep- ie safe side of the latter, as the distinguished ier does on that of science; for his maxim is, *ets pas ce que je ne comprends pas.* Now it evident that the prudent Whigs act upon the nciple; and as they cannot comprehend merit ould they?) they make a point of never ad- it. If poor Mrs. Waghorn could get it done ription (for she never would be able to afford the maid-of-all-work board-wages the Go- it have so munificently awarded her) I should er to have Monsieur Arago's maxim of—

"I do not admit what I cannot comprehend,"

d on her husband's tombstone.

nocent and uninitiated are always marvelling shallow charlatanism of the strolling-player's r, Lady ******, should be set in in a pension a-year, and the eminent national services of in Waghorn insulted by a parish allowance of ear, or ten shillings a-week, to his widow; , to be sure, the uninitiated are not aware of y convenient Lady ****** has been to one or erations of Whigs. I suppose it was on that her husband married her, thinking, no doubt, ooked wife, like a crooked sixpence, would m luck; though, when they were in Paris,

the French used to say of him, touching his wife: "The poor man cannot help being an apothecary, but he really should not drag his drugs about with him." Another *mot* I heard of this old *parvenue* was, that one day she was with her usual scarlet and yellow vulgarity, boasting to a distinguished literary man of all the fine people who disgraced themselves by going to her house;

"On Mondays," said she, "I have my political *soirées;* on Thursdays, my Devonshire House people;" (I suppose of an evening, the *filles-de-chambre* of Devonshire House, like all others, occasionally do get leave to go out!) "and on Saturday," concluded this well-bred lady, "I have my writers."

"I should think," said the witty gentleman, so flatteringly invited, "that Lady ****** will always find it easier to get writers *than readers.*"

Blest shade of Henry Grattan, forgive me, that I should have mentioned on the page made sacred by your name, that of a Lady ******!

CHAPTER IX.

My Aunt Bell, I regret to say, so totally differed from my Aunt Marley about the plan of sending us to school at our age, for the first time, in which we were quite of her opinion, that the day previous to that event, having received a petition from a gouty gentleman in the hotel against the incessant slamming of her bed-room door, she had absconded to another *locanda*, and left us in total ignorance as to her whereabout. Nevertheless, the terrible next day that we were to go to Miss James's "Establishment," arrived at last; but it was not so much the going there that was so terrible, as the leaving my uncle. Yet how should we ever be able to bear the death of those we love, if absence—its only less cruel deputy—did not in some measure prepare us for it? Still I maintain, that our first serious grief is the worst of all; not only from the heart in youth being infinitely more

tender and susceptible, but because *then* that first grief has the whole heart to itself, and therefore leaves not the smallest fibre unwrung; whereas, in after years, like all other abodes of human misery, that same heart is so densely populated with every species of sorrow and disappointment, that let what fresh agony will arrive, it finds itself so jostled by a crowd of others, that it is fain to wedge itself into its allotted place, and vainly struggles for pre-eminence or precedence: nay, the odds are against its finding a single tear for its use, or a bit of heart (which is the food of affection) left for it to break.

My uncle, with many a sigh, had taken a small house in Lower Berkeley Street. I don't wonder at his sighing, for, truly, there is nothing more vulgarly *mesquine* than the whole style of the general run of small London houses, unless, indeed, it be the minds of their owners. In those days the style of building had not, as now, so uniformly improved; for now, civilization is most sensibly evinced, by building small houses on a large scale, and thereby affording that most to be pitied of all classes—the "poor rich"—the decencies, not to say elegancies of life, upon small means; but then there were but the two extremes of splendour and shabbiness; if you could afford a palace, well and good; if you could not, you had no alternative but a pokey house, as vulgar as supreme bad taste, and our national shopkeeping parsimony, could make it; but as this brick and

mortar hulk was to be papered and painted, and undergo thorough repair, before my poor uncle was drafted into it, he was going, after the London season, to join my aunts in Ireland, in order to escort them back. This only made us feel more completely desolate; for, with the exception of Mrs. and Miss Waltham, whom we had never seen, but who lived at Fulham, and had promised occasionally to look after us, and Lady Plantagenet, who had done the same, we did not know a soul; there was not one familiar face for us in all that great Babylon, except, indeed, poor Nelly's; but putting the snuff out of the question, how were we ever to get to Fleet Street? and if Nelly came to Miss James's superlatively "*genteel establishment*," it would certainly occasion a fainting epidemic among the young ladies of that emporium of elegance. Altogether it was a terrible morning that 3rd of June, 1816; nor was the taking leave of poor Pomba and Fido the least terrible parts of it, for they were now both old dogs, and the light was beginning to leave their eyes, but the love had not left their hearts; it never does leave a dog's heart but with life. Poor innocent, darling things, they knew well the final separation that was hanging over us, by the manner in which they moaned and trembled; and though Morden promised faithfully to let us know every morning how they were, yet what was to tell them that *they* were remembered, and still loved as fondly as ever, when the assurance was no longer kissed into their

At length all our miserable arrange
completed; and Morden announced tha
Marley was in the carriage waiting for u
been for the last quarter of an hour alc
uncle and the two dogs; and now when
the last, my uncle's forced gaiety forsoc
his tears mingled with ours, as he folde
arms, blessed us, and told us to be good
the poor dogs, accustomed to share eve
had, scrambled up upon the table, and p
paws round our necks, licked the tear
cheeks. It now transpired for the first
my uncle had been decidedly averse from
plan: he had wished us to be sent dow
brokeshire, to Mrs. Vavasour's, and to h
choose a governess for us during my aunt's
to Ireland, but had as usual been overrul
appeared that our cousin, Mary Scott Bar
married to an English country-gentleman,

Penrose, touching her mother's "infamous conduct," (for so they termed it), in accepting a property that she had no right to, and that should in justice at my father's death have reverted to us; therefore, we had her orders to profit by those numerous opportunities afforded in that vulgar quintessence of the larger world—a school—of visiting the sins of the mother upon the child, in every way we could; and so involuntarily do young persons imbibe the prejudices and opinions of those in authority over them, that already we felt an anonymous antipathy for Helen Penrose, merely because my aunts had always despatched her in one of their sweeping clauses, as "a detestable little wretch."

But, with our dear good uncle, the small tributary streams of thoughtful amiability and active kindness were ever flowing into the great Pacific Ocean of his boundless benevolence; and he said to us now for the first time, not to appear to oppose my aunts' sovereign will, and also, that being his parting injunction, it might make the more impression on us.

"Oh, by the bye, I meant to say to you, darlings, with regard to that little Penrose, who will be one of your schoolfellows, it is not her fault, you know, if her mother has behaved unhandsomely in accepting all the property that should one day or other have been yours; so always make a point of being very civil and kind to Helen, unless you find her in herself an unamiable or disagreeable girl, and then keep out

more effectually than we can ever avenge
for He knows far more accurately than
much they have sinned against us; besi
you find yourselves very uncomfortable at
Mrs. Vavasour has been ordered to Tun
you have only to write to her at

'MYRTLE COTTAGE,

'THE ROCKS,

'TUNBRIDGE W

and she will either send or come for yo
not have returned to town:" and here he
note into each of our hands, which we
refused, as Grace had £12, and I £1
More kisses, more blessings, more tears
looks—till it came to the last; and the
ourselves in the carriage with my Aunt Ma
we had quickly to dry our tears, which
exceedingly angry, for she said they evince
ingratitude in us, instead of thanking

at of a clock does sometimes from intense
eric cold; and certain it is that there are per-
hose presence *one cannot even think one's*
ughts, much less feel one's own feelings, so
s is their stagnation.

ngth, in silence and in sorrow, we arrived
he ponderous gates of Concave House, for
very appropriate name was Miss James's
ishment" designated; and truly, nothing could
r calculated to make hollow characters, than
its superficial and inane arrangements. It
rge, red-brick pile of building, with stone
indulging in strange nightmare sort of capers,
urst forth into grotesque nondescript-looking
like aggravated symptoms of that brick-and-
scarlatina, which was the prevailing archi-
epidemic during the reign of James II. ere
llayed by a little orange aid: a large, stern-
stone eagle graced, or rather guarded, each
he gate, and most formidable they were look-
if they had birch in their head and grammar
eye; and verily, the grammar at Concave
nust have been in somebody's eye, as it most
y never was in anybody's mouth.

is age of progression Concave House has also
ed; for I understand it has since become a
mad-house, whereas, at that time, it was only
m for idiots. Mole looked so melancholy as
d the deep-toned bell, that if feelings and

footmen ever went together, I really should have felt sorry even at leaving *him*; the more so, that it was certainly a good trait in the man's character to seem so sorry to get rid of us, when it is recollected that we had forestalled the treadmill in his individual case, by the incessant journeys, the eternal getting up stairs he had had on our account for the last six years. We had not to wait long after the summons for admission.

As our arrival was evidently expected, and the gates were accordingly opened by the gardener, and as the carriage made the circle of the gravel-sweep up to the house, all sorts and sizes of heads—from the pink top-knotted housemaid's down to the poor miserable, half-fledged raven-looking child's, the last consignment from Calcutta, or Madras—were to be seen stealing furtive glances from behind the blinds of the different windows, which would have almost led the ignorant and uninitiated like ourselves, to suppose that the young ladies at Miss James's "Establishment," like pigeons, had each a separate niche to themselves, which, alas! was very far from being the case: so much for that eternal difference between realities and appearances. A cherry-cheeked, but somewhat masculine-looking maid, in a pink gingham gown, and a whole forest of green ribbons in her cap, opened the door, and like a genuine *British female*, as she was, seemed most deferentially respectful and attentive to Mole, and was most

empressés to save him (as one of the superior sex), every trouble in taking the small packages out of the carriage.

It is on record that Frederick II. of Prussia, after assisting at the mass of Cardinal Zinzendorf in the church of Breslau, said, that "the Calvinists treat God as an inferior, the Lutherans as an equal, but the Catholics treat Him as God." In like manner, Frenchwomen treat men as their inferiors or slaves, Italian women place them on a footing of equality, but the genuine *British female*, of every class and denomination, treats men as gods, the only visible classicality in their education; this universal man-worship, or *homo-homage*, is no doubt an imitation of the women of ancient Greece, who used also to sacrifice to the infernal gods.

When Jemima, the cherry-cheeked portress of Miss James's "Establishment," had therefore paid every attention and respect to Mole, lightening his labours as much as possible, she turned to my Aunt Marley and said:

"Will you please walk into the parlour, Mum?"

And suiting the action to the word, she placed four fingers (which might at any stall have sold for four radishes) against a door, which pushing open, she said she would let Miss James know. We found ourselves in a large room with a Turkey carpet, the *obligato* War red moreen curtains in black cotton velvet bonds, though the windows looking into the

garden were shaded by a natural drapery of a very luxuriant passi-flora, or passion-flower, then in full bloom; but the inventory we were all tacitly beginning to take of this room was interrupted by our perceiving a young lady of about seventeen seated before a grand piano, on which she was barbarously murdering a few of the wounded at the battle of Prague: had she put them out of their misery at once, it would have been less cruel, but she was so long in deciding whether she should despatch them with a flat or a sharp, or let them die naturally, that the torture (even to our ears) became insupportable.

One thing, however, is quite certain, she could not have been the most distant relation to the young lady who possessed such wonderful musical genius, that in playing "The Storm," she always turned the beer sour in the cellar. She rose at our entrance, and then for the first time, we perceived a *corps de réserve* in the shape of another young lady, about ten years old; notwithstanding the difference of their ages, they were both dressed alike, that is with white cross-barred cambric muslin frocks made tight up to their throats, with very shabby shoes rather down at the heel; their hair, which was of the brightest red, they wore in curls round their necks *à l'enfant;* but considering they had just retreated from "The Battle of Prague," it was natural they should have their fire-locks on their shoulders. My Aunt Marley, who had very good manners when her temper did not interfere with them, now accosted this pair

(who were preparing for flight) in the most gracious tone possible, saying:

"Pray don't let us frighten you away, we are so fond of music; and I think you will find my two nieces, upon further acquaintance, tolerably good musicians."

Not a syllable in reply from the two flamingoes. My Aunt Marley perceiving at once that she would have to make the whole outlay for the conversation, valiantly returned to the charge.

"I fear you were practising, and that we have interrupted you?"

"Oh! no, um, I'd done," stammered the largest carrot at last, backing all the while towards the door.

"Are you fond of music?" asked I of the smaller one; but less fortunate even than my Aunt Marley, this young lady vouchsafed no reply, but hiding her head behind her sister's back in a way that made one fear the frock would the next moment be in flames, she began to giggle, when vigorously and suddenly towed by her elder sister, they made a bolt for the door, and had no sooner reached the hall than we heard a loud laugh. This certainly was not a very attractive *affiche* for the elegance of Miss James's "Establishment."

The coast being now clear, we once more began to look around us; the first thing that struck me was, the over population of little card-board hand-screens, portraits of divers bunches of grapes, and bunches of flowers, no doubt the production of "the young ladies;" upon the mantel-piece, which was high, were

various hyacinth-glasses and bulbs, in card-board pillories of pink and gold paper; also several weeping willows of green, blue, pink, and yellow silver papers; ultimately intended for *allumettes*. While over the mantel-piece was a fine portrait in oil of the tutelary deity of the place, Miss James herself. She was represented in the costume she always wore, which consisted of an insertion lace scull-cap, much resembling the shape of an egg; a piece of black velvet round her forehead, and tufts of little flat ring-like curls on each side, her hair being of a dark drab colour like her complexion; her eyes of a light greenish-grey, particularly cool-looking and refreshing in summer. Her nose would have made an admirable politician, as it did not pledge itself to any particular line; her mouth also would have done for a patriot, as it boldly went from one extreme to the other; the *Sartor Resartus* was not then written, or else its clever author might have had a chapter modelled on Salisbury plain, with Stonehenge left out, to describe Miss James's dress; for there was certainly nothing stupendous about it, as it consisted of a plain—very plain—white cambric muslin dress, more proper than picturesque, made tight up to the throat, with a short waist and long tight sleeves. Miss James was further represented sitting very perpendicularly in an arm-chair, a book open in her hand, and her eyes steadily fixed upon an "invisible" girl, whose lesson she was *supposed* to be hearing.

The *accessoires* of the picture consisted of a pair of obes on a table in the background; "The Morning st," and a glass of water with one cabbage-rose d a bachelor's button in it. On the wall opposite is Kit-cat hung another, of a red-faced looking perage, in male attire, with a blue coat and gilt buts, a beaver glove on one hand, while in the other held a newspaper, which appeared to divide his ention with a glass of brandy and water (painted th great *spirit*) that stood on a table covered with reen-baize cloth, beside him. In the corner of this rtrait was written in large gold Roman letters—

"MY DEAR FATHER, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1803."

doubt a touching instance of Miss James's filial ection; while under this picture was one of a young ly about two years old, in a lace cap and blue ribs, distributing her hands and feet (the latter in red es, the former in red flesh) over a field of buttercups.

"I wonder whose picture this is?" said I, looking it.

"No doubt 'my dear father's,' when he was a little l," rejoined Grace, laughing.

Under this picture was a kind of procrustes bed of ard square sofa, and before it a Pembroke table, on which was a large Tunbridge workbox, with a ge Bible on one side, and "Debrett's Peerage" on other, bound uniform, as they generally are in st English people's minds. I had forgotten to

mention, that on each side of the fireplace were two ricketty, black mahogany screens, supported on a claw of three talons, the top or screen part being in the form of a shield or escutcheon, composed of white satin, which now began to look very bilious from the accumulated late hours of many years; for one was a most elaborate sampler, which, besides all the letters in the alphabet (at least), and a goodly array of recruits from the multiplication-table, which however were cut off in the bloom of their youth, for they did not reach to twenty, there was a very splendid house of red silk bricks, with a flight of grey silk steps coming down to a beautifully rural green silk lawn, laid out in the Dutch style, with finely intersected gravel-walks, graphically simulated in orange silk. The whole was enclosed in a magic circle of posts and chains, while, like the cherubim at the gates of Eden, stood two round powder puff-shaped green silk trees, pouting in all directions, with fine ripe, red silk cherries, and a flaming parrot (not sword) perched on the top of each of them; while, according to the sensible custom of the old masters, the artist's name appeared in the corner, and was proclaimed by the verdant and roseate hues of pink and green sewing silk to be no less a personage than "Priscilla Penelope James," to which was added the date of "May the 15th, 1770."

The other screen, which was the same in shape and material, was nevertheless of a higher grade of art, as it combined painting, as well as needle-work. The

subject was at first rather puzzling, as it consisted of a ruin executed in Indian ink, which seemed to deplore its fate in every crevice, as it looked despairingly adown a gloomy plain, also in Indian ink; while here and there a gnarled oak, broken and withered, but with a still ample foliage of green and brown silk leaves and acorns, seemed proudly endeavouring to assert its superiority over some "tall bully" of a poplar; while to this uninviting scene a gentleman in a bag wig, yellow silk coat, plum-coloured unmentionables, splendid Dresden lace *jabot* (in real lace, however it got there), flesh-coloured silk stockings, *marquisite* sword-hilt, and knee-buckles, with his arms spread out, warring with the air, as if he had been playing at blind-man's-buff, not professionally *pro bono publico*, but all by himself, as an amateur, wholly and solely for his own amusement; however, the following lines from Parnell, embroidered underneath in roses and forget-me-nots, explained the mystery:

> "The story told, Sir Topaz mov'd
> (The youth of Edith erst approv'd)
> To see the revel scene:
> At close of eve he leaves his home,
> And wends to find the ruined dome
> All on the gloomy plain."

While we were still laughing at Sir Topaz, the door opened, and Miss James herself made her appearance, which was precisely that of her portrait, only with the

addition of a large square sarcophagus-looking brooch, set round with pearls at her throat, containing a plait of light hair, that looked exceedingly like a door-mat; her dress terminated in a broad hem, and herself in a pair of tea-coloured boots, laced up the front; while in her hand, she carried a small West Indian basket, in which were a bunch of keys, a letter, and a pocket-handkerchief; in her wake followed another female form, also "robed in white," and similarly booted and basketed, only no cap, but a very rough, dry-looking wig of great probity and moral courage, as it made not the slightest attempt to pass for anything *but a wig*, or to deny that it was a chip of the old block from whence it had sprung.

This lady was thickly pitted with the small-pox, and was moreover so exceedingly rubicund, that she would have looked jovial, but for that *nolo mi tangere* freezing-machine air, which all *British females*, (more especially governesses) confound with being lady-like, not that this said freezing apparatus of manner ever in the long run prevents their running into the most vulgar familiarity, or taking the most unpardonable liberties.

"Ahem! my friend, Miss Omeny," said Miss James, waving her hand in the direction of her companion by way of introduction, as they both seated themselves, and began perilously balancing themselves at the edges of their chairs, as if further back there had been a *chevaux-de-frise* of spring guns and steel

ps, or, to say the least of it, a bed of nettles, and
ich, like those delusive pleasures from which it
s Miss James's vocation to teach her pupils to fly,
uld have been sure "to leave a sting behind."
In proportion as well-bred persons put you immedi-
tely at your ease, so under-bred ones have the
appy art of making you feel as awkward, as
barrassed, and as uncomfortable as themselves; so
t the sedentary martyrdom Miss James and Miss
nny were apparently enduring, even subdued my
nt Marley, who, not very well knowing how to
er towards the North Pole, broke the ice by saying:
"I am afraid we frightened those young ladies
ay who were playing when we came in."
"Oh! no, em; it was time for them to go to their
rench class."
I here had occasion "mentally to ejaculate"—as
e 'Minerva Press' novels say—"How odd! We
ve only heard the sound of three persons' voices
nce we entered this house, namely, the maid's, the
d-haired warriors of 'The Battle of Prague,' and
iss James's own frigid zone, and yet we have had
hree different *patois* for the monosyllable ma'am:
um, *um*, and *em!*"
My aunt, having taken courage, next proceeded to
ive Miss James a catalogue *raisonné*, or rather *dé-
isonné*, of all my high crimes and misdemeanours;
r, perhaps with that purblind self-delusion to which
e are all prone, I certainly did not recognise myself

in the remorseless monster my Aunt Marley described —all on account of my fatal talent for mimicry— which, at all events, she had contributed to cultivate by the constant exhibitions she had endeavoured to make me give of it. But that was nothing. I was so used to her exaggerations of my most trifling faults, that had she accused me of murder, I should not have condescended to contradict her, as her tirades had always the effect of hardening and petrifying every spring of my heart at its very source, and, had it not been for the all-vivifying influence—the eternal sunlight and genial warmth of our dear, kind uncle's universal nature, which, like his great prototype in the planetary sphere, equally conveyed health and bloom to the humblest flower, or brilliancy to the most costly gem, without ever endowing the one to the neglect of the other—I might have been all my Aunt Marley tried so indefatigably to make me. Poor Grace, however, was not so stoical on these occasions as I was, and now, bursting into tears, said:

"Oh! pray, Aunt Marley, don't say such things! you will make Miss James think I don't know what of Miriam; and, so far from being ill-natured, as you would make any one believe, she is the most good-natured person I ever knew: only Mirry is like Uncle Paulett,—she never *talks* even to me; she never makes promises or professions, but she is always *doing* something that will please, serve, or agreeably surprise me; and, what is better, she never alludes to, or thinks

anything of what she does—it is only by accident one finds it out—and every one says the same who knows her. For my own part, I hate talk. If that would do one any good, one might keep a parrot, and teach it all the fine sentiments and professions of regard possible."

"Tais-toi, Jean-Jacques, on ne te comprend pas," said I, as I had often heard Mademoiselle de Guilbragues say, and I pressed Grace's hand as I added, in a low voice: "Don't you know I'm an eel, child? and skinning is nothing when one is used to it."

"It is astonishing," said my aunt, now turning to Miss James, with one of her radiant smiles, "how fond Grace is of her sister:—she thinks her perfection!"

And, indeed, it was astonishing, considering the seeds of envy, hatred, and malice my aunts had so unsparingly tried to sow between us, or rather it would have been astonishing, but that "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone giveth the increase," and, more blessed than all, He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, often neutralizes the poison to the badly-trained child; for the heart and mind that are warped even by the worst education, and the most pernicious examples, depend upon it, *never were straight*; bad education may, and unquestionably does, engender bad habits, and faults of manner and temper; but a good heart is like real religion, for the one to be good, and the other to be

genuine, God must be the centre of each; and as every aspiration of a sincere piety ascends to him, so do the concrete impulses of an upright heart emanate from Him. In vain, then, will faulty training and pernicious influences, like dense clouds, cast their murky shadows; if the pure light is but there, it *will* shine out at last. Alas! that in some hearts this Divine light should not exist, but in its stead a moral nebula, which all the bright host of Heaven only serves to discover, without ever for a moment penetrating or filling its dark, barren, and mysterious void!

Oh! it is a fearful and bewildering thought to speculate on *how* the Avenging Angel may fill such vacuums at crack of doom, when the last sand shall have fallen from the glass of Time, and he himself creation's patriarch! floats a pale corse upon eternity's unfathomed sea—that sea which never gives up its dead!

My Aunt Marley next proceeded to express to Miss James her despair at the smallness of our appetites, and also a hope that the air of Kensington might be beneficial in augmenting them. To which Miss James replied, in a voice so piano as to be almost inaudible, although there was no gallery, that "*her* young ladies never complained of want of appetite;" and, indeed, she had never made a truer statement, for there was a plentitude of appetite at Concave House, I might say a surplus, so that it was only of want of food that the girls sometimes complained; but, upon

ll such occasions, Miss James took the opportunity f practically illustrating to them how perfectly nvailing every sort of complaint is in this world. t length, having said everything she thought necesry, my aunt rose to take leave, as she intended oing on to Brandenburgh House, to see the Marravine of Anspach, who was then in England, during ne of her short flittings, previously to her return to Naples; for that mercurial old gentlewoman used to ly about Europe then, as the cholera, revolutions, nd the sea-serpent, do now, leaving quite as many onderful tales behind her as any of them, not xcepting the tail of the sea-serpent.

It was not till the last sound of the carriage-wheels ad died away, and Miss James had put out her hand vith a flourish to escort Grace up stairs, while Miss Omeny performed the same ceremony towards me, hat we felt really and helplessly alone; I verily believe that a strange paradise, till the first bloom of t had become familiar, would be an uncomfortable lace; judge then of the cold, petrified, prim, double-istilled strangeness of an English boarding-school, s they were in the year 1816, for I hear they are otally different now; however, I never believe even alf that I hear.

It was the month of June, and the weather was unusually warm, still the very marrow in my bones eemed to freeze as the sound of my aunt's chariot-heels died away; in short, though I have never been

a poodle, at least, not to the best of my recollection, and have never been shaved, except by hotel and lodging-house keepers, I am sure that the chilled nature of my moral sufferings on that occasion must have geometrically corresponded with the physical shiverings of those poor animals, when they undergo the tonsure for the first time, on a gusty day in March; the fact is, the proceeding was a most cruel one: we were too old at sixteen and fourteen to take a plunge into the frozen ocean of boarding-school life, for our psychological muscles and fibres become rigid and unpliant infinitely sooner than our physical ones, and it is far greater torture to totally change the habits and element of persons at a certain age, than it would be to try and twist old muscles and sinews into the elasticity of an opera-dancer.

However, it was some sort of relief on our way up stairs to find that neither Miss James's nor Miss Omeny's lungs were in that enfeebled state which their *sotto voce* monosyllabic conference with my Aunt Marley would have led one to suppose; for they now distributed several scoldings to stray maid-servants, *en route* to the school-room, in a voice which, for strength and shrillness, would have done credit to an hereditary parrot celebrating its third jubilee. Miss James appeared greatly scandalized at our tears, or rather sobs, for she said, previously to throwing open the school-room door, and turning us into the pound with the other calves and donkeys:

"Hush! I must have those tears dried. *My young ladies* never cry; no weeping is allowed here, except to the willows in the garden."

I afterwards learned that every new arrival was treated to this bucolic piece of sentiment, which, nevertheless, and notwithstanding its poetical and metaphorical tone, contained the one great fact in English female education; for at Miss James's "Establishment" the young ladies were duly taught on all and every occasion to suppress their feelings till they had none left to suppress, and had attained to that pitch of sublime apathy which cares for no one, or nothing, beyond *self*, which is considered the *beau ideal* of the "lady-like" in England. There was also the orthodox quantum of what Carlyle so happily terms "that misdirected industry which is seen vigorously enough thrashing mere straws;" for much and regular labour was expended by the young ladies at Concave House, in learning to mis-pronounce French and Italian, and malign English, with infinite researches too into the mysteries of coloured crewels and tinted papers, by which alone they gave evidence of their disinterested generosity of character, as these things could never, by any accident, be of the slightest use to them in any possible revolution of after-life.

When Miss James threw open the school-room door, the *tableau* displayed an awkward squad of some thirty or six-and-thirty girls—for the latter was the

real number—from the ages of seventeen to seven. These were now standing in classes of ten, more or less, on one leg, with one shoulder out of their frocks, and their hands behind their backs, before their respective benches at the lower end of the room; while at the upper end, at each side of the fireplace, were two small square tables, behind one of which sat a very fat woman, called the Italian governess, though she was English, but said to have married an Italian, and therefore designated as Signora Beccaccia. She was flanked by a very thin, red-nosed English governess, a Miss Flippins, who sat beside her, not exactly like Thais beside Alexander, for she had no resemblance whatever to a "blooming Eastern bride," but a very strong one to a sharp knife, ready to dissect the plump woodcock on her right.

Behind the other table (which was also covered with green cloth, like a conjuror's—though, Heaven knows, *they* were no conjurors!) sat two more teachers; one avowedly English, a Miss Sharpe; the other, though in reality a Miss Humphries, the daughter of a respectable grocer in Holborn, was called, by particular desire, "the French teacher," for which no doubt her father's dealings in French plums peculiarly qualified her; and she was further travestied into Mademoiselle de Montmorency. These little liberties with historical facts Miss James justified, by the universal prejudice then reigning in England against the immorality of French governesses. The

English were wrong, as, notwithstanding their infallibility, they are very apt to be; for at that time the French governesses to be had were women not only of the highest family, but of the greatest moral worth and most extensive acquirements, who educated the hearts and dispositions of their pupils, although they were guilty of, at the same time, cultivating their manners, those "outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace" of moral rectitude; though in England, I believe, good manners are considered next a-kin to impropriety; at least one would infer this from the vile bad manners, or at best the total want of manner, among all classes in this country, from the superior man and woman who never read novels, down to the inferior ones who read nothing else.

Now there is a rage for French and Swiss (which are by far the worst of the two) governesses, and yet the prejudice against them would be much better founded now than it was then; as now they are generally not only persons of faulty education themselves, low birth, and vulgar minds and habits, but, nine times out of ten, having no characters to lose, have none to maintain. It is no doubt this heterogeneous and ill-assorted species of education which is the cause of our national *modo vastator*—for English people as little understand the philosophy of manner as they do of dress; and it is for this reason that we so often see a *levée en masse* of all the colours of the rainbow in

one unfortunate *British female's* costume or white stockings, with a black dress! and unmarried girls in velvet and jewels; and quite as often by way of having a manner of some sort, the same unmarried girls with all the off-hand patronizing *àplomb* of a married woman, or the unabashed *minauderie* of a veteran coquette, which is even more offensive than the orthodox national freezing-machine, milk and water, inane tariff of lady-like bearing.

But I must not any longer leave the young ladies at Concave House, standing on one leg, like tired geese after a long day's march towards the London market. When we arrived, it appeared they were conjugating the verb *avoir*—to have; though we did not immediately recognise the name of our old acquaintance in the following reiterated sounds:

Jay,	I have.
Too ah,	Thou hast.
Ill ou elle *ah,*	He or she has.
Nous *ev-vonge,*	We have.
Vous *e-vay,*	You have.
Ills ou elles *own,*	They have.
J'avvy,	I had.
Too avvy,	Thou hadst.
Ill avvy,	He had.
Nous *aviong,*	We had.
Vous aviez,	You had.
Ills ou elles *avvet* (avaient),	They had.

For such was the Concave House edition of this notorious verb, by which it certainly might have escaped detection from the combined vigilance of the European police, even had every member of it been a Vidocq.

No sooner, however, had Miss James opened the door, than she announced to the assassins of the French Grammar, that they were to have a half-holiday on account of our arrival; whereupon some of the younger girls gave a few natural bounds across the room, for which, of course, they were instantly checked, and mulcted of two hours' play, to learn a double lesson, to be either fifty lines out of "Thomson's Seasons," or three pages of "Rasselas," whichever their own judgment might deem the least suicidical.

This sentence passed, we were formally presented to all the teachers, Madame Beccacia and Mademoiselle de Montmorency receiving orders always to address us either in French or Italian; but, like the dunce who could read out of no book but his own, strain our powers of divination and attention as we would, we never could understand a word they said; while they, notwithstanding their foreign cognomens, were so truly patriotic, that they were always correcting in us, poor dear Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' Parisian French, and the Abbate Assai's Tuscan Italian. And so people go through the world nominally speaking the same language, and yet eternally falling out, *faute de s'entendre.*

While the ceremony of introduction was taking

place between the governesses and ourselves, the elder girls had gathered round, and stared at us as if we had been two hippopotami just imported, which perceiving, we bowed to them in a circular direction, so as to include them all in the salutation; but instead of returning it, they only began to whisper and giggle, and nudge each other, which we thought extremely ill-bred, but for which, however, Miss James never corrected them, or the teachers either, because, as we afterwards understood, it was a half-holiday, and the young ladies had a right to do what they liked, as long as they did not make a noise. While they were still staring at us in a manner that brought the tears into Grace's eyes, and the blood into my cheeks, a bell rang, which warned the young ladies that it was time to change their frocks for dinner, especially as Jemima, the buxom maid, accompanied by a coadjutrix in pink ribbons, now appeared to lay the cloth; whereupon all the young ladies paired off with an alacrity that showed meals were more attended to than manners at Concave House, which was evincing a very undue partiality, for, in point of scarcity, the latter even exceeded the former.

At this signal Miss James, and Miss Omeny, who never dined with us (sensible women) vanished by a side-door into another room; and as the teachers followed their pupils, we were left to follow them, which, not doing immediately, on reaching the landing, we were looking about, not knowing which way to go,

re two staircases only divided by a door,
passage. While still in this dilemma, a
king little girl (in a clean white frock, and
ce, with a beautiful skin and complexion,
uch colour, sunny brown hair, parted on
and large, honest, affectionate-looking
out nine years old, came swinging down
case, and making a magnificent cheese at
, till suddenly perceiving us, she stopped,
tly, and then coming towards us, with-
either laughing or giggling, said:
ow you the way upstairs?"
u, dear; we shall be very much obliged
re, holding out our hands to her, which

ascended the stairs together, the little
und, and said to us:
ns, the Sedleys, were to come here to-
they?"

so glad!" said she, clapping her hands
stness that would most unquestionably
a strong dose of Thomson or "Ras-
er, had it been seen.
are you so glad?"
use I like you, and because my mamma
a has been very kind to her; and I was

"Then you are little Helen Penrose?" said I, kissing her.

"No, big Helen Penrose," said she, laughing, "for Uncle Scott Barry always calls me the Newfoundland pup; he says I am so big, so I'll be your dog while you are at school; may I?"

"Yes, that you may; only you know, if you are my dog, you'll have to fetch and carry, and I don't know how much kissing to endure, for I am so fond of dogs, and have two such darling ones at home," and here I again began to cry, thinking of poor Pomba and Fido, to say nothing of his master.

"Are you Grace or Miriam?" asked Helen, throwing her arms round my neck, and taking up the skirt of her as yet unsullied frock to dry my eyes.

"I'm Miriam."

"Then, Miriam, you must not cry, for do you know they won't let one cry, or laugh, or do anything one likes here."

"Oh, yes, they will. Let you, and Grace, and I, be very good friends, Helen: they can't prevent that."

"No, indeed they can't," said she, again affectionately kissing both me and Grace, which last kiss brought us into a dormitory with some ten or twelve little white dimity curtained beds, evidently modelled upon the scene in "Les Petites Danaïdes," after the

One in which Monsieur Surnois, that model of fathers, says to his daughters—

"Mes chères amies, faites-moi l'amitié de tuer vos maris."

To which, not being able to refuse so good a father such a trifle, they immediately consent, with the exception of Hypermnestra, who I suppose was a great florist, and so had no fancy for weeds. Out of this room Helen led us into an inner one, infinitely smaller, where, upon a marble-slab, with a fountain above it, swelled a republic of delft wash-hand-basins, while round this room hung a legion of coarse towels with black initials upon a square piece of white painted wood above each: they looked as if they had done sufficient duty at least for one day. "There," said Helen, pointing to two unused huckabacks, "there are your towels, and take care you always put them up so as they don't blow down, for when they do, Miss James always makes us pay a forfeit of twopence, as most of us have only sixpence a week, these forfeits (for she has them for everything, if we go home on Saturday for instance, and don't go to church with the school, there is another twopence); seldom leave us more than a penny each week, and we are always in debt to the cake-woman."

"Well, but don't your mamma allow you this pocket-money?" said I.

"Oh! yes; but Miss James pays it to all the girls, and puts it down in the bill."

I soon discovered, to my cost, that the "Concave House" exchequer was precisely on the footing that Helen had stated, that is, that Miss James punctually charged the parents these sixpences, shillings, or half-crowns a-week, according to their stipulated allowance, but, thanks to her financial system of imposts (*alias* forfeits) worthy of "the heaven-born minister" himself, she seldom disbursed more than a tithe of these monies to their nominal owners.

"What are you waiting for?" asked Helen, seeing that we still remained inactive.

"For the maid to come and pour out the water," said I.

"Oh!" said Helen, laughing, as she went over to the slab, pushed a basin under the fountain, and turned on the water, "we have no maids here; we are obliged to do everything for ourselves."

"Oh! that we are used to; our governess always made us dress and undress ourselves, and fold up, and put by our own things at night; only the housemaids used to pour out the water for us, and all that sort of thing, and fill the bath night and morning."

"There are no baths here to fill," said Helen.

"Well, but," interposed Grace, "how long they must be one after another washing at night, and in the morning, if there is no other dressing-room but this!"

"There is one other: but they don't wash one after another,—half-a-dozen wash at the same time."

"How disgusting!" said Grace.

But we soon discovered that a little washing, like a little learning, went a great way with the young ladies at Miss James's "Establishment," and that they had not such universal ideas upon that subject as we had.

"What are you looking for? There's the soap," cried Helen, pushing over a piece of mottled abomination, that looked like a block of Stilton cheese.

"I was looking for the almond paste."

"The what! oh! I know; mamma uses it for her hands."

"And don't they use it here?"

"Not they!" said Helen, laughing.

Poor Aunt Marley! how kind these cold, niggardly school deficits made even you appear. Where was that delicious brown soap, like a conserve of flowers, of Rigges's? where his fragrant almond paste, worthy of Venus herself? and his still more fragrant extract of roses for washing and beautifying the hair (as it really does), making the air ambrosial with its breath, that you were so particular we never should be without, and for which, among many others, our dear good uncle had to pay such large bills at Christmas? Where, indeed? I know not: I only know they were not at "Concave House,"—at least, till our things were unpacked; and then, how we were laughed at by "the young ladies"

of Miss James's "Establishment" for using what they, in the plethora of their vulgarity, of course called "*scent!*" and doubtless many a self-styled superior mind will join them in their laugh, for there is a certain class of persons, educated in coarse, not to say nasty, habits, who think it a proof of a strong mind to despise what they call externals, whereas, whatever spurious genius may make poets, painters, and musicians, or however some great unwashed, or little uncombed, may get entangled in the thickets of a Black Forest of incomprehensible German metaphysics, till they fancy themselves philosophers, they may rest assured that there can be no really fine texture of mind without refinement of habit, that is, without an attention to, instead of a neglect of, externals, for the shadow in all things evidences the substance.

A real gentleman or lady would cheerfully submit, if needs must be, to dining off dry bread; but they could not eat venison off a dingy cloth, with dim plate and glass. Not so, your coarse minded, self-superior persons. Quantity is everything with them, quality nothing. A Mrs. Simpkins would not care how scant or how common her under-garments were, as long as she appeared at church in a silk gown and showy bonnet; whereas, a Lady Edith would never dream of being ashamed of the cheapest dresses, or the plainest bonnet; but then, her linen, stockings, gloves, and *lingerie* would be sure to be both fine and plentiful; and oh! horrible extravagance! one of her pocket-

lkerchiefs, in all probability, cost more than Mrs. pkins's fine gown and bonnet put together; for atter is real, and the former spurious. Refinement i in realities; vulgarity in imitation and assump-

There is, in fact, as wide a difference between me and the other, as there is between the Pan-nism of *talked* Philanthropy, and *practised* Gospel al Benevolence.

resently, a din rose on the air, as if the echo of a ic of human voices had floated down from the er of Babel. It was "the young ladies" dressing ie next room. It appeared they did not trouble oap and water during this noon-day operation. n we joined them, and "Jemima" had excavated evening frocks for us, we again found ourselves *point de mire.* It is true, that our dresses were to criticism, for, though of fine Indian muslin, med with very costly Mechlin lace, yet both would been the better for a little mending; whereas the ng ladies" at "Concave House" had one and all , white checked, muslin frocks, with plain tucks iem, and no adornment whatever, save that of g in thorough repair. They also wore unani-ly either coral, or red cornelian necklaces, with xception of the Miss Sherwoods, the heroines of e Battle of Prague," who wore white ones, as a ing relief to their hair.

uckily for us, the second dinner-bell now rang; I uckily, for, had we remained up-stairs ten minutes

longer, under the piercing glances of "the young ladies," I am certain our unhappy frocks would have been riddled through with additional holes. It was a great relief, as well as protection, that Helen sat next to us at dinner. Novelty is said to have charms; but this, like every other general rule, has its exceptions; and certainly the novelty of eating for the first time off white, delft plates, with steel forks, was one of its most striking, and least pleasing exceptions. I was the more surprised at this, as Miss James had announced that every young lady brought a silver fork and spoon with them to school, and we had brought half-a-dozen, bought on purpose for us by our dear, kind uncle, and marked with our initials, as well as two little silver tankards, which, however, with the spoons and forks, were also invisible, as down the table were a range of blue, delft mugs, half full of water, which really was a cruel stint, considering the hydrophobia heat of the weather, for Helen informed us that, let nature demand it as she might, we were never allowed more. By the side of each mug was a little, attenuated piece of bread, and, as if there had not been ugly mugs enough down the table, two teachers sat at the head, and two at the foot. Before these teachers were two great straw mats; between every six or seven girls was a white, delft salt-cellar, with a bone salt-spoon in it, for which an incessant squabble among the sixes and sevens was kept up during dinner, and formed an animated substitute for conversation.

ıe curious in gastronomy, I give the *menu du* Jnlike all others, in a school dinner, the sweet ke precedence of the viands. This I under- s to damp the appetite, and really, if such were tion, it was a most merciful one. On the day rrival, the *soi-disant plat doux* consisted of ked like a very large snow-ball, which Helen l to me was boiled rice, without sugar, milk, el, or any foreign adjunct. A small flake of lame Beccaccia put on every plate, and then, uce-tureen, poured over it a spoonful of some s sort of liquid, that looked most suspiciously e for pasting paper on a wall. As, not being , I never attempt to speak of what I know about, I can only describe the culinary cu- s Alphonse Kar does in that charming little ris, "Un voyage autour de mon jardin," the s they gave him in Picardy: "En Picardie," "on m'a servi des tartes aux poireaux; ce s mauvais—si on en pouvait manger!"

manner, I am sure this boiled snowball with ice would have been execrable, if one could en it. At the foot, was an ordinary sized leg n, about ten pounds, and a dish of potatoes. used to say, "that a barber always began by beggar, even if he ended by shaving a duke." on't know whether Mademoiselle de Mont- (*alias* Humphries), ever further transmigrated arber, but this I can with truth aver, that

if she did, *she began* by shaving a leg of mutton, as the humane reader will readily believe, when he or she bears in mind, that there were thirty-five girls, with perfectly gladiatorial appetites, besides the four teachers, and yet learns that this miraculous leg of mutton not only dined (or rather was accused of dining) us all, but actually made its appearance cold the next day to repeat the same phenomenon.

It is true, that the four teachers supped with Miss James and Miss Omeny, and there is no knowing how independent they may have made themselves of this diet, which was not even that of Poland, but worse still, of Hung(a)ry.

The next *tour de force* was Miss Flippens and the potatoes, one of which she carefully, and with almost geometrical precision, divided into four, giving a fourth part to each young lady as her share; and don't let the speculative reader for a moment suppose, (I say speculative, because this *modicum* of potatoe will doubtless remind him of railway shares *sauté à la Hudson*), or still less conclude, that Miss James imported her potatoes from Brobdignag. No such thing, they were the mere ordinary sized potatoes grown in the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

This "solemn fast" was held every day at two o'clock; while at six, very different and most tantalizing culinary odours pervaded the house from Miss James's own dinner, as it appeared that she preferred celebrating the festivals ordained by the Church; but

though Church and State are inseparable in England, our state was most deplorable. I had never been to Vauxhall then, and homœopathy was at that time unheard of in England, so that I had never seen even ham cut so thin, much less such infinitesimal particles of roast mutton distributed before.

"Oh! that Gifford's Soul" had formed the blade, and "Jeffries' Quill" the edge of the carving knives at "Concave House," that they might have cut up the joints as unsparingly as if they had all been standard works as yet unbacked by name or fame, when at the expiration of a quarter of an hour Jemima removed with a jerk the empty sarcophagus that had contained the potatoes, and bore off in triumph that real *pièce de résistance*, the leg of mutton, which had so wonderfully resisted the sharp gnawings of forty appetites, and the equally keen glances of eighty eyes. Madame Beccaccia elegantly knocking on the table with the handle of her knife, (which indeed otherwise would have had a sinecure), said in a loud voice:

"Young ladies, say grace."

And I was much surprised to hear, that the formula of this thanksgiving was:

"For what we have received, the Lord make us truly thankful."

But having been brought up to tell the truth, *coûte qu'il coûte*, I involuntarily changed it to:

"For that which we have *not* received, O Lord, make us truly resigned;" which poor little grain of truth,

however, like many others, was not detected amid the numerous falsehoods amongst which it was wedged.

Dinnner over, (since such they were agreed to call it), it being a half-holiday, we were allowed to repair to the garden, which we never went beyond, except of a Saturday, when we were regularly marched to Chiswick and back, why, Heaven only knows, except it was that it made us so tired, we could not even eat the very small quantum of food we were allowed to discuss; but this being only Friday, the garden, which was really a nice one, with a pretty piece of water, was our boundary.

There certainly must be a strong sympathy between gingerbread and grammar, although, perhaps, it is an over-dose of the former that prevents young ladies and young gentlemen from properly digesting the latter; but certain it is, that this sort of magnetic attraction exists between them; for it is astonishing how intuitively the cake-woman, always appended to a school, knows when a new customer hovers about the treacle of her horizon, and nears the pole of her barley-sugar, or the arctic regions of her almond comfits.

Mrs. Quince, the tart-woman of Concave House, (though no relation to Peter Quince), was really a comely-looking dame, in a bright-red cloak and black silk Bath market-woman's sort of gipsy hat, and the summit of *Mont Blanc* was not whiter than the linen that lined her basket, which was not only exceedingly becoming to the cakes, comfits, and occasional pears

and plums, that it contained, but considerably expedited their sale, by making them look more *appétissant*.

Scarcely had we been five minutes in the garden, before Mrs. Quince made her appearance, as if she had really been waiting behind the scenes ready to come on; and she certainly was "well up" in her part, as she knew the taste of every individual girl in the school, from the youngest Miss Sherwood's political mania for "Parliament," and her sisters' unhappy passion for caraway comfits, up to Madame Beccaccia's secret sighs for peppermint lozenges.

Still I remarked, as she came curtseying down the gravel walk, generously offering her basket with unlimited credit to each and to all, first one head was mournfully shaken and turned away, and then another, so that the basket, in its progress, remained undiminished. I then remembered what Helen Penrose had told us about Miss James's mortgages on the weekly shillings and sixpences, which she was always foreclosing; and, Heaven forgive me! but I now thought these heavy fines went to pay the butcher's bill, which must have been a very light one, although meat was then a shilling a pound.

"And what can I tempt you with to-day, my pretty young ladies?" asked Mrs. Quince, curtseying up to me and Grace. "I never wants to be paid until such times as it is quite convenient to a young lady's own feelings. I've not been in the trade thirty year, a

serving on the very first 'Establishments,' both as regards male and female education, without knowing that both young ladies' and young gemlen's arts is often fuller than their purses, or their stomachs, poor dears, prape heavier nor heither, no disparagement to their masters and missusses, who of course know best; so what shall it be, my dears? you see I have a good choice,—plain buns, Bath buns, queen cakes, as really is fit for any queen, though I say it as shouldn't say it, maids of honour; but as I told the young genlmen at Dr. Classic Gander's just now, I should be deceiving on 'em, if I didn't tell them that they were stale; sponge cakes, quite fresh *they* be, lots of parliament, but that never does nobody no good, so I never recommends it, though it is agin my own hintrest. Then in confectionary, there's kisses, almond and caraway comfits, barley sugar and bull's eyes, and double peppermints to-day, the fat Tallian governess, Madam Beckacakezon, she's particklar partial to them, *she* is."

"How much does all your basket come to?" said I.

"Well, I could tell, if so be as my son, Joe, war here; he makes all the kalkilations, and does up the counts and bills like, he do; but I'll let ee know the next time I comes round, if ee'll be pleased to say what ee'd like to take now."

"But I want to buy the whole basket, so can't you tell me now?" said I.

"Lor! well, I don't know, but aint you afeared, my

dear, as you'll be a making hon yourself hill?" said Mrs. Quince, with distended eyes and compressed lips, evidently even more in the basket than her cakes, and not knowing whether it would be quite prudent to give me credit to such an unheard-of amount.

Perceiving what was passing in her mind, I put my hand into my pocket (for poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues was vulgar enough always to make us wear pockets in our petticoats) and drew forth a little purse of emerald-green beads and seed pearls, which had been her parting gift, and the slides of which were gold rings, containing little miniatures of Louis XVIII., monstrously like, which were then to be bought at any jeweller's throughout France, for the small sum of six francs. Athwart the meshes of this purse glittered ten golden guineas; their effect was electric, not only upon Mrs. Quince, but upon the whole school, governesses included; however, my business was now with the former, to whom I repeated the question, of how much the whole contents of her basket would amount to?

"Well, my dear young lady, I'll tell ee in a moment, if you'll just be so good as to wait a bit?" said she; instantly, without further delay or demur, commencing the calculation on her fingers, and soon arriving at the "tottle of the hole," without Joe Quince's, or even Joey Hume's assistance. "Well, my lady," for now I was my lady, and all for ten guineas! which was even more dirt cheap than a modern peerage, or

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baronetcy; "well, my lady, as near as I can make it in a hurry, just fourteen and twopence."

"Very well," said I, handing her a guinea, "give me seven shillings, and I'll owe you twopence till the next time."

"Lor love your pretty face," said she, placing the guinea between her teeth, while she drew forth a leathern bag of portly dimensions, tied round and round like the neck of a wine skin, with another piece of leather, from which bag she counted out seven shillings, "owe me as much as you like."

"Here, Mirry," cried Grace, giving me a seven-shilling piece, "let me pay half?"

"Not to-day, another time; you know you have generally money when I have none, and then I shall be glad of it."

"Oh, very well, only remember that I owe you seven shillings."

"Now, Mrs. Quince, I'll tell you what you must do for me."

"Lor love ee, what is it? anything short of going a-hossback to the top of St. Paul's Cross."

"I don't want you even to go to Bambury Cross," said I, laughing; "I only want you to leave me your basket till to-morrow morning?"

"Dear heart! to be sure, and welcome; thank ee kindly, my pretty dears, and anything as I can ever do for ye in *my* way, I shall be proud and appy: yer servant, ladies all."

And Mrs. Quince rolled up the gravel-walk, as if had just dropped from one of the neighbouring es.

'Now, Grace, help me to carry this great basket; stop first; Helen, you must lighten it a little: e what you like;" and Helen modestly took a en-cake and a kiss.

'Nonsense, child! we shall never get on at that e: hold out your frock;" she did so, and we tossed hower of cakes and comfits into it. Here Miss ppens obligingly came forward, and said:

'Allow me, Miss Sedleys, *to help you* carry that ket."

'Thank you, but we like the fun of carrying it, you will have the goodness to take what you like of it."

'Oh, thank you!" said she, with a sort of half-lian greyhound, half-governess sort of tremulous ertitude, that strongly reminded us of some of the niggins' *pianissimos* before the Magnates; and s Flippens helped herself to a bun of her own ed, that is to say, a plain one.

'Do take some more, pray," said I, "or we never ll get on, if we don't find better customers."

'Oh, I'm sure you are very good;" and with indescribable sort of little wriggle, or rather *gglette*, and her right foot tossed rather jauntily ut a quarter of a yard from the ground rearward, took, what I certainly think she otherwise never

would have got—a kiss; and then, upon second thoughts, for propriety's sake, as witnesses, I suppose, a couple of maids of honour.

We then made a tour of the other teachers, and afterwards the girls. "The double peppermints" being done up in little white cornucopias (of which there were only three), I considerately placed them in Madame Beccaccia's hand, thinking that as she was not Queen Elizabeth, she might not have liked publicly to select and proclaim her favourites. And here again, as with her majesty of hypocritical memory, the maids of honour were very useful in covering the favourite's retreat. Among nearly all the elder girls, our proffered sweets were at first rejected with a—

"No, thank you, I have no money this week."

"Money! you don't suppose we want to sell them?" said I. How I looked as I said this, I'm sure I don't know; but I felt just as a blacksmith's forge looks, when it roars up of a dark winter's night, and the red light glows, and the sparks rush upwards like a prayer of fire, appealing to heaven against the iron blows of man.

"No, thank you, I really have *nothing to give you in return!*" was the second disclaimer; for our national idea, true to our national practice, is "nothing for nothing," and it is for this reason that English people, if you show them the slightest courtesy or attention, and still more, if you volunteer to do them a service, instead of feeling obliged, or even having

the common decency to say, "thank you," always begin wondering what it is you want from them? Or even when they implore you to render them a service, which they do more more servilely than any people under the sun, they think the surest preservative to their pride, which, by-the-bye, is as spurious and abominable a compound as their wines, is never to evince the slightest symptom of recollecting it.

However, as hunger is said to drive the wolf from the wood, so the same tyrant, at length, drove the bear from the Concave House ménagerie; and the young ladies ultimately condescended to devour the cakes. It was a great relief when there was not one more to entail upon me another rebuff, for one gets horribly lacerated in England, in the long run, at being always thrown back upon one's self.

I was sauntering leisurely up to the house with the empty basket, when, in ascending the door-steps, my foot got entangled in the skirt of my frock, and I very nearly fell; but Miss Flippens, who happened to be going in at the same time, caught me, saying, as she seized my arm:

"*That's just like I did* yesterday."

I confess I was surprised that a person deputed to teach elocution should so express herself, and in my ignorance fancied it arose from a strange non-acquaintance with the English grammar; but after I had been some time longer at Miss James's, and saw poor Priscian's head so much more mutilated, I changed my opinion, and concluded that the copy-book

was right, and that "familiarity" does "breed contempt;" and that consequently it was the great familiarity subsisting between grammars and governesses which made the latter take such terrible liberties with them.

When I had thanked Miss Flippens for her timely intervention, she said to me:

"I suppose, Miss Sedley, as you only came from town to-day, you don't want anything there; but if you do, I am going as far as Temple Bar at five o'clock."

We English are proverbially fond of rarities, so I thanked Miss Flippens cordially for her attention, and said, if she would have the goodness to leave a note for me at No. — Fleet Street, I should be very much obliged to her.

"You are, of course, aware," said she, "that the young ladies never write or receive letters, even to or from their parents, without Miss James's perusing them."

I was not aware of it, and felt extremely indignant at the announcement; making a mental reservation (so much for the efficacy of this disgusting system of *espionage* and restraint) that any letters I really cared about, Miss James should not see; for there is a modesty about all real feeling, which makes it as repugnant to a delicate mind to bare its heart to the profane scrutiny of promiscuous indifference, as it would be to bare the bosom that conceals it. I do not for a moment mean to say, that persons having the charge of

young people of either sex, should not be made scrupulously acquainted with all their pupils' correspondents, even to seeing the writing and signature of every letter they receive, and the commencement and superscription of every letter they write; but the stultifying and uncandid state of mind that this vulgar *surveillance* of reading every letter the pupils write and receive forces upon the latter, is on every account reprehensible. How gratifying it must be to a mother, twice a-year, or even once a quarter, to receive such a document as this from her daughter; and what a delightful idea it must convey to her of the expansion, progress, and affection of her child's heart and mind!

"Dear Mamma,

"I hope you are quite well, and also papa. I am very happy here: Miss James is very kind, and many of the young ladies prefer remaining at school for the holidays. I am painting you a pair of screens, which I hope you will like. I also hope to be able to play a duet with Miss Sharpe at this half-year's concert. With love to dear Papa,

"Believe me, dear Mamma,

"Your dutiful and affectionate daughter,

"PRUDENCE FREEZE.

"April 1st.

"PS. Pray don't take the trouble of sending the plum-cake, as we have as much as ever we can eat

here; and Miss James thinks sweet things bad for us."

Or such a one as this from a son:

"Mammon House, April 1st.

"My dear Mother,

"Dr. Classicgander desires me to say, that he hopes you and my father, and any friends you would like to bring, will be able to come to our speeches this year; as I am happy to tell you I am well up in my Virgil, and Dr. C. thinks, almost immediately after I go to Harrow, I shall be in the sixth form: this at least is 'my thought by day, and dream by night.' God willing, however, as Petronius says,

"'Somnia quæ mentem ludunt volitantibus umbris,
Non delubra Deûm, nec ab æthere numina mittunt,
Sed sibi quisque facet,'

which my father will translate to you.

"With love to him and my sisters, and kindest love to *dear* Aunt Frumpington, whom I hope will come to the speeches,

"Believe me, my dear Mother,

"Your dutiful and affectionate son,

"DIONYSIUS SELF.

"PS. The Dr. having been called away, and having left my letter sealed up upon his desk, I slip in this

e of paper, to beg you will send me a tip. Try get me £5 from the Governor, as we have a club he village, where we have capital feeds, and lots of , that the old curmurdgeon of a Dr. knows nothing at; but as long as we keep the Greek and Latin g, it's all right—and he never smokes. If the rernor won't shell out, you must make the girls do etween them. Aunt Frumpington gives them lots ash, and what the deuce do girls want with money?

'Hoping you will send me the tin immediately,

"Yours ever, dear Maternal,

"D. S.

"PS. Again—*I must* have the blunt by this day ek."

All this passed through my mind, but all I said is:

"The note is only to an old nurse of ours, who eps a shop in Fleet Street, and to whom I promised write as soon as I could, after we came here; and iss James is very welcome to see it."

"Oh! that of course," rejoined Miss Flippens, as we nt up stairs, she going further to prepare for her trip town, and I turning into the school-room to write y despatch, which for Miss James's special edification was determined to make as good as Hebrew to her, d accordingly commenced as follows:

"Ah! thin, Nelly, *allannah*, how are you, woman, and the man that owns you? Sure it's yourself that would say the same to uz, if you were here: so I say purty well, thank you, Mrs. Jiffs, and I hope you're the same, ma'am. Och! Nelly, dear, it's you that would open your two good-looking eyes, if you could see the illigant dinners we have here; it *makes one hungry only to look at them;* and all the young leedies so cute and so sprightly, that you can't look at them, but they begin to laugh, and giggle; but they are mighty discrate for all that, as they never *say* anything; and mighty good-tempered, for they never answer one. In short, Nelly, *agrah!* we'd be as much divarted here, as at the play with Munden, and the other actor wid the fat name. What is it then? oh, Suet! if it was'nt that home *will* stick to one's heart, like a burr to one's clothes and in either case, fretting is the consequence; but plaise the pigs(present company always excepted), it's ourselves that will go and see you, Nelly, *astore!* the first time we can get any one's horses and wheels to take us so far; for your shop is not to be sneezed at, except by *raison* of its being a snuff-shop maybe; and that reminds me of the rest of your stock-in-trade, your own particular pig-tail, Jeffs; we hope he is well, and continues dutiful and obajent, as you larnt him to be from the first; and that unlike Dermot, he's never extramely bould. As Jeffs will tell you, 'wind and tide wait for no man;' and *faix*, Nelly, dear,

ɔe mighty like wind and tide to their pupils,
of ours takes this, no more at present,
ıce's love, and that dearest Nel, of your
ul and affectionate child,

"MIRIAM SEDLEY."

as I had finished this charming epistle, I
directed it, and knocking at the side-door,
hich I had seen Miss James, and Miss
ish before dinner, and in which room Helen
lways sat.

in!" said a voice, from under the Scotch
, which I recognised as Miss Omeny's; so
in I went.

chaise longue near an open window, ap-
shaded with the Passion Flower, sat Miss
half recumbent posture; on a chair beside
animal of the male species, in hay-coloured
ed up into a sort of distaff, which perfectly
what his late Majesty Louis Philippe's wig
been before it came of age; in short, before
reless hues had been darkened by the sha-
Crown; but there ended all appearance of
the individual in question. His eyes were
ur, shape, and expression of bottled goose-
is nose was short and thick, with spreading
at gave it exactly the appearance of a *terra*
f the Ace of Clubs. His upper lip was very
ot the more beautiful on that account, as it

straight, sturdy, and reddish, like the m
ornaments a lobster's tail; his mouth
dulous order, for it certainly was wide en
anything; and the under lip exceedin
his right cheek was a scar, or cicatrice,
a burn, or it might be the evil; and if
evils he had certainly *not* chosen the l
was a very large one. His teeth were
jecting; and his smile the most eva
thing that can be conceived, renderin
scooped-out pumpkin.

Notwithstanding his *physique*, and h
ever, I afterwards learned that he was
these ladies, and was a Mr. Perkins, t
apothecary of the district. The scand
asserted that there was in some part o
globe a Mrs. Perkins, who, like the
oral tradition, but not a visible fact;
ever seen her. The *on dit* was, that

circle of the public weal, neglect their own families, and nearer claims; for though numerous were the individuals whom Mr. Perkins *vid* calomel, laudanum, or phlebotomy, had despatched to the other world, yet his own wife was not a single pill the nearer to it, though the said scandalous chronicle, at the same time, boldly asserted (for the scandalous chronicle, like all others, has two breaths, one hot and the other cold) that Mrs. Perkins *really was* defunct, but that this lenitive electuary of a Macheath was so happy with both Miss James and Miss Omeny, that he did not like to decide upon either; as Miss James's dinners and *petits soupers*, though perhaps not exactly sparkling with the wit of those of the *ancien régime* in France, and Miss Omeny's luncheons, he seemed to think he never could have too much of; whereas, he knew by experience, that a little matrimony goes a great way towards giving one enough of it! and as among the lower and middle orders, the period of courtship is the period of cramming, Mr. Perkins preferred resembling a turkey, to making a goose of himself.

His dress was of course black, with the exception of a cerulean blue watch-ribbon, a present from Miss Omeny; for those were the days of watch-ribbons, and ponderous seals, something like jack or clock-weights. One of three that dangled from Mr. Perkins's fob, had his crest engraved upon it, a vulture with something in its mouth that looked very like a leech; the other contained his initials, "G. R. P.,"

turned up over, as if running after his nose, which was not however easily overtaken, as it had the start; and also turned up, as if making for his forehead, which was rather low, and rather flat; two thickish wisps of hay formed his eyebrows, while his eyelashes were straight, sturdy, and reddish, like the marine fringe that ornaments a lobster's tail; his mouth was of the credulous order, for it certainly was wide enough to swallow anything; and the under lip exceedingly thick. On his right cheek was a scar, or cicatrice, like that left by a burn, or it might be the evil; and if so, between two evils he had certainly *not* chosen the least, as the scar was a very large one. His teeth were large, and projecting; and his smile the most evaporated-looking thing that can be conceived, rendering his face like a scooped-out pumpkin.

Notwithstanding his *physique*, and his physic, however, I afterwards learned that he was *l'enfant gâté* of these ladies, and was a Mr. Perkins, the surgeon and apothecary of the district. The scandalous chronicle asserted that there was in some part of the habitable globe a Mrs. Perkins, who, like the cuckoo, was an oral tradition, but not a visible fact; for no one had ever seen her. The *on dit* was, that her death had been announced as inevitably to take place before the end of the month for the last ten years: and yet that she was such an incorrigible dawdle, that she was not dead yet; another proof of how persons devoting all their time, power, and capacities to the enlarged

"but Miss Flippens said you wished to see every letter that I wrote, and I have brought you one that I have written to my nurse."

"Oh!" ejaculated Miss James, instantly consolidating into the perpendicular, "my young ladies are not allowed to write letters whenever they please; there are stated days devoted to *epistolary correspondence*, when the young ladies are permitted, under the superintendence of the teachers, to write home to their own *residences*, or to such friends as may have left town for their country *mansions;* each letter, of course, being finally submitted to me for approval, but as you, Miss Sedley, are only just come, I shall for this once overlook this irregularity, and allow you to send this letter after I have perused its contents."

Previously, however, to doing so, Miss James thought fit to do me the honour of presenting me to Glauber Rodolphus, but with that ineffable vulgarity of mind peculiar to English people, who never value you for what you are, but always for what you have, or for your connexions; instead of simply naming me as one of her new pupils, and his future patients, (for it was the rule of the school, that all the girls were to be dosed twice a week, whether they wanted it or not, an admirable expedient for increasing Glauber Rodolphus's bills, and diminishing the small *quantum* of flesh that spare diet left upon their bones,) she said:

"Miss Miriam Sedley, Mr. Perkins; a niece of Lord Lutron's and Sir George Paulett's, one of my new pupils."

"Most proud and appy, Miss, to be so *circumstanced* in Miss James's 'Establishment,' as to ave the hoppertoonity of making your acquaintance, for I once ad the *h*oner of attendin your *h*uncle, Sir George, *pro*fessionally; it was before you was born I should say, now a'most seventeen years ago, indeed I was quite a youngster myself then."

"Ah! you must indeed have been young then," asided Miss James, with a sigh, as if she feared he was now old enough to know better.

"And it so appened," continued Mr. Perkins, "that while walking the hospitals, what with too much stoody, and one think or another, I ad injured my ealth," (*recitative* sighs from Miss James and Miss Omeny,) "and so ran down to the Isle of Wight for change of hair!" (that I was by no means surprised at,) "your huncle, Sir George, was then canvassing Newport, for which place he was hultimately returned. Never cared a better speaker in my life, and it so appened, that one morning, having received a message from his committee, and thereupon dressing in a great urry to go down to the ustings, his valley in shaving him cut him; I was at breakfast in the coffee-room of the hotel, when one of the waiters came running in looking for some cobweb to staunch the blood; I instantly went up stairs, and hoffered my services to dress the wound, the job was so slight that I refused to take a fee, and so, Sir George, who, as I suppose, I need not tell you, Miss, always does heverything

in the handsomest way possible, presented me with his own gold snuff-box, which I always carry about me, you may see, Miss," concluded he, producing it and opening the lid, "his harms are hinside."

I seized the box, and kissed it as rapturously as Miss James could have done herself, but not because it belonged to Mr. Perkins, but because it had belonged to my dear good uncle, whom I again found sparkling like a gem even among all this rubbish; and, despite every effort to suppress them, I burst into tears, which of course procured me a lecture from Miss James, who said "that young ladies should never give way to their feelings: it was vulgar, to say the least of it."

Here Mr. Perkins scientifically suggested that the snuff might be in fault, and thankful for this diversion in my favour, I indignantly dried my eyes, and meanly let the tobacco bear the blame; after which Miss James began reading my letter to Nelly; a great elevation of the eyebrows was the first symptom she evinced.

"Pray, Miss Miriam," said she, at the third line, "may I ask what language this is?"

"The most classical Clanfuddle, Ma'am."

"The most classical *what!*"

"Irish, Ma'am."

"Dear me," said Miss James, while Miss Omeny gave a sympathetic shrug, "how your education must have been neglected!"

understand.

"Do you, who know everything, un
Mr. Perkins?" said she, placing my
in his hand.

"Well," replied Glauber Rodolpl
chin between the finger and thumb of
and glancing diagonally to and fro acr
if he were trying medically to recollec
was infectious, contagious, or cutan
never tried, but I dare say I do; for I
a many of the lower horders of Hiriah
(gratis, of course). Em!—em!—em
means 'Ha!' the same has hin Heng
presume, his meant for a Henglish wor
a slight orthographical herror hin it, t
spelt 'then,' and not 'thin.' Em! e
hal, Al Hannah.' I have heered
Martin," observed Mr. Perkins, facet
came to the word "Alannah;" "but
of all Hannah before. Em! em! em!

a make-game sort of letter—a joke, like—on the part of Miss Miriam, to one of the lower borders of Hirish."

Miss James, glancing from Mr. Perkins to the strawberries, thought they had waited too long; and evidently thinking I had done the same, gave me back my letter, saying:

"Well, Miss Miriam Sedley, as you say this Nelly is your nurse, you may send this letter this once; but in future you must not make any jokes, or have any jests, that I or Miss Omeny cannot understand."

Thought I, as I curtseyed, and left the room, glad to have got off so well, "It would be very hard to make a jest that you *did* understand."

In the school-room I found Miss Flippens, ready-scarfed, straw-bonnetted, and green-veiled, to start for town. I hastily sealed my letter, and gave it to her, remarking that I feared she would find it very hot.

"Oh, I don't walk—I *shall ride*," said she.

"But how can you ride, without a habit?" replied I, in my then ignorance of this crowning English vulgarism, which always substitutes ride for drive.

"I don't mean to ride on horseback."

"Well, but even on a donkey?" interrupted I.

"Lor! I never do that," laughed Miss Flippens, "except at Ramsgate, where Miss James sometimes takes us in the holidays, when *I help drive* the donkeys for the young ladies, and occasionally get on one

myself; but I always ride in the Kensington coach as far as the Bank."

I stared; but as, like Sterne, I interfere with no man's hobby, or woman's either, as long as it don't splash me—which the imaginary steed upon which I had mounted poor Miss Flippens certainly could not do, though albeit the four wheels of the Kensington coach, converted into a ride, did very rudely bespatter my point device ideas of the English language; and to this day I have a silly trick of positively writhing under the sufferings of that noble language, mutilated as it is by the scavanger's daughter of bad grammar, and broken on the wheel of mispronunciation; for I totally differ from Shakspeare, and quite agree with Mr. Shandy, that there is everything in a name; otherwise such graces of language and style as the following could not pass unlashed, even in the milk-and-water pages of "a British Female," if the authoress had not made a name.

An English Peeress (not in jest, mind, but in solemn seriousness) is described in a recent "popular novel," as writing to a young lady whom she wishes her son to marry (an heiress of course), and speaking of this son, whom she wishes to pourtray as a desponding lover, she says: "*I can assure you, my dear, he is become dreadful bad since you have been gone;*" while "*I'll do it in a jiffy,*" is the favourite expression that the authoress puts into the mouth of the heroine whom she denominates "a young lady of

n," upon the charitable principle, I suppose, of
Dutch painter, who used to write under his pro-
ons, "This is a tree," "This is a cow," &c., &c.,
g that without such announcements, the iden-
f the objects never could be guessed at. Again,
proof of the omnipotence of a name, the whole
have heard of John Hampden; and how many
world I should like to know have heard of Sir
y Digges, equally a patriot, flourishing at the
time, nobly fighting with immense contemporary
m in the same cause, and moreover a distin-
ed scholar and author, but such a name naturally
his grave with posterity; a great name has
for its shadow, which, like every other shadow
ses as time advances by ever going forward,
stigia nulla retrorsum.

t Miss Flippens who had not a great name, and
quently no shadow to signify—with substance in
rtion, five minutes after I had given her my
to Nelly, contrived with the temper and keen-
f a razor, to wedge herself as sixth into the
ington coach, called the "Despatch" (I suppose
its being four hours in getting to the Bank)
en another much blunter blade, in a brown coat
ark-coloured shorts, and gaiters, who never made
ast way for her, and a fat woman in a crimson
gown and a blue satin bonnet, with a black
er in it. I had followed her to the gate as the
drew up, and perceived some of the young

gentlemen peeping over the wall at "Mammon House" opposite, who appeared most classically shocked at this false quantity; and, while they were still laughing at poor Miss Flippens's *charade en action* of *multum in parvo*, I retraced my steps to the garden, and rejoined Grace and Helen Penrose.

At eight o'clock, we "sky-blued and dry-breaded it," as the girls more graphically than elegantly called —what the teachers denominated "supper!" and indeed that most social word was much abused in being so used; for this repast consisted of three square pieces of bread, almost an inch thick, which seemed to have been left next a piece of butter in the larder, and had reflected its shadow; these three squares (not solid ones most assuredly) were placed before each girl, with the same blue mugs that graced the dinner-table, half filled with very feeble milk and water; for the milk morning and evening at "Concave House," like Cowper's rose, always had been washed—just washed with a shower which Jemima to the schoolroom conveyed.

At half-past eight prayers were gabbled, for I cannot call them read, or said; at nine, we went to bed, and I was surprised that previously to so doing, the soap and water were left quite unmolested; but on the other hand, there was a great ceremony of curling hair—the young ladies having their combs, brushes, and paper in linen bags for that purpose, and some of the said combs and brushes looked as if they would

be all the better for a little of that soap and water which their owners so heroically denied themselves. The governesses did not come to bed till eleven—one sleeping in each of the rooms, and ours had the lion's share, in Madame Beccaccia; she and her bed being a very ill-assorted pair, the former being so large, and the latter so small; consequently the groans and struggles of both, during the night, were dreadful, the sacking and wood-work of the one resenting, with a vehement creaking and squeaking, the incessant twistings and turnings of the other; and so, with a fervent prayer, and another flood of tears, when the lights were taken away, and no one was there to scold me for being so vulgarly demonstrative as to show any feeling, even if I was unlady-like enough to possess it, ended the first day we passed at Miss James's establishment, which may be taken as a type of all the rest.

The next morning Morden, however, brought us word that my Aunt Bell had been found (intact) at an hotel in St. James's Street, for she had flown into a violent passion with him for having discovered her retreat, which he had done quite accidentally, by seeing her at a window, as he happened to look up to see whether it rained, as he was going with the dogs for their morning walk into St. James's Park. She was, moreover, he said, as furious with Grace and me, as if the going to school had been all our doing, instead of our detestation. However, in this

my Aunt Bell, worthy soul, was only like the world; which, instead of pitying us for our misfortunes, generally further maltreats us on account of them, and revenges them on us. And yet this is called an enlightened age! if so:

"Si ergo lumen tenebræ sunt, ipsæ tenebræ quantæ erunt?"

CHAPTER X.

THE disagreeables of most positions seem to lessen under a more intimate acquaintance with them; for "the great first cause—least understood," has kneaded the stern necessity of his decrees with the lightening leaven of compensation, and the same familiarity that takes the gloss and the edge from pleasure, generally blunts the sting of sorrow, discomfort, and disappointment. But I cannot say that the leaven rose well at Concave House: on the contrary, as week followed week, and month month, our individual daily bread grew heavier and heavier; to have one's physical hunger deluded with garbage, when one has been used to Cates, is bad enough; but to have the mind's cravings goaded by inanity is ten times worse, and however small the spark of sacred fire within us may be, yet if it has been kindled at the great altar of high

intelligence, it has a hard struggle to keep its flame steady through the dense miasmas of an atmosphere of ignorance and neglect. "The progress of learning" at Miss James's was about as interesting and instructive to us as the being condemned to three or four hours of ragged school A, B, C work would have been to Locke, or to Sir Isaac Newton,—in all humility I speak it, though great the comparison be, and the little that was taught was all wrong; but such is the system of English education, which consists of a tariff of suppressed facts, or facts distorted or falsified to suit what is considered the orthodox moral standard.

Hence, beyond these little stultified, decorated, and made up abridgments of history, literature, and biography, the male and female youth so educated seldom know, or care to know, a single fact. Men, indeed, may, if they please, both with profit and repute, soar into the higher and wider regions of knowledge; but woe to the woman who dares to unfold her intellectual wings for the same journey, for she is looked upon as a sort of human bat, not tolerated by the hawks of men, and pulled to pieces by the cats of women. She may console herself with her own thoughts, and, like a bee, revel in the hive she has stored; true, and this would be all very well, if to borrow a truth from the Enchiridion of Epictetus, the end of a human being were thought, and not action; but as that end happens to be the latter, our thoughts will always influence our actions: and it is

precisely because there is so little right and well directed thought, especially among women, that there are so few good and praiseworthy actions.

Even in more modern times, namely, the present, which have left the war and its monstrosities seven and twenty years behind, and when the rising generation have the inestimable benefit and blessing of that deputy special Providence for children, "Peter Parley," to whom, as testimonials are the fashion, every child ought to contribute, at least, a month's toys, and their mothers a quarter's pin-money to raise one, yet still the young are not quite fairly dealt with, even by "Peter Parley," that real Peter the Great, for in his biographies he also uses the scissors and the varnish-brush a little too much—as in his "Life of Nelson," for instance. The impression conveyed by that memoir is that, among his other numerous virtues, he was also a paragon of a husband. Now, I do not for a moment mean to say that young minds should be vitiated by details of his *liaison* with Lady Hamilton, any more than they should with a history of the intrigues and immoralities of Queen Elizabeth, but I do say that, in both instances, the facts should be stated, and not those eternal false impressions, with their ultimate poison conveyed, for it is in vain we learn, in after-years, the degrading or indefensible vices of persons who have been held up to us as models and candidates for our admiration in youth, the inevitable consequence of all such false standards of

greatness is the conclusion that a little worldly glory does, and ought to gild, what in ordinary mortals, without either name or fame, would be considered unpardonable and inexcusable vices and crimes.

Few suns had more brightness to redeem their spots than Nelson's; he was, indeed, a real hero; not from his martial skill in organizing and triumphantly achieving those wholesale butcheries which men call glory, but from his noble, generous, straight-forward, honest heart, his high and single mind, where simplicity sat enthroned—as it does in all *really* great minds—like a star within its own pure orbit; his tender humanity to his men—more like that of a mother than a commander—his chivalric honour, which really raised the mere plebeian thew of animal courage into an almost sublime attribute, and his total absence of all petty jealousies, in *la lutte du métier*. His manner of presenting Captain Berry to George the Third, at the first levee he went to after losing his own arm, would alone, without one of his victories, have made him a hero—in my estimation.

"You have lost your right arm!" said the King.

"But not my right hand," replied Nelson; "as I have the honour of presenting Captain Berry to your Majesty; and I can never think that a loss which the performance of my duty has occasioned."

As far as this generous, warm-hearted compliment to Captain Berry goes—worth a thousand baronies or ribbons of the Bath—we may turn in vain to the

'clopedias of history—article Wellington, in the of finding a similar trait; but then, to be sure, on was a sort of golden-age hero, and the Iron s is an iron-age one: and even that has passed , and given place to an age of tin—which is the field version of the golden calf that all England bow down to and worship—their *Hudson*-worship ping, in unspiritual idolatry, the Ganges worship e Hindoos.

r some time after our incarceration at Miss s's, Morden continued to bring us either a letter, ws of my uncle and the dogs every morning—e had soon left off bringing the poor darlings selves, as these daily renewed partings were too ul on both sides—for there is nothing more wing than the "inarticulate cries and sobbings lumb creature," which, as Carlyle says, "in the f heaven are prayers."

e also received, by the same channel, constant rs from Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, and Bloom oni, which letters, and our answers to them, we ot give Miss James the trouble of reading, for the er contained details of private and personal affairs, h, not being our own, we had no right to divulge, he latter were an analysis of feelings, which Miss s could not comprehend, and, consequently, d have deemed highly reprehensible. I am sorry we were driven into this concealment, for conceal-s are always objectionable, if not always criminal:

but what could we do? We were much too old to succumb to the scholastic epistolary formula of "My dear Mrs. This, or Miss That, we are quite well, and hope you are the same." The very desultory and unaccredited nature of our education, without either father or mother (which is always a lamentable, and, when not caused by death, an unnatural position), had given us, perhaps, too great an independence of character to moral rectitude, both my uncle and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had taught us to cling, as to a grappling-iron, and never to slacken our hold let what temptations or persecutions might ensue, but always to make the lesser duty yield to the greater, or pleasure, profit, or convenience give way to either.

Now feeling that there was no positive wrong in not showing Miss James our letters, beyond the non-conformance with a very equivocal rule, and that it would have been actually dishonourable to betray the confidence intrusted to us by others, we continued to receive our letters through Morden, without Miss James's intervention. At least those that came from France; for my uncle, after he left town, always directed his letters to us openly and honestly, as he did everything, and completely won, or rather would have won, Miss James's and Miss Omeny's susceptible hearts (if Glauber Rodolphus had not been beforehand with him) by the honourable mention he always made of their names, especially, as I, having reminded him of Mr. Perkins' "*pro*fessional attendance" to

administer a piece of court-plaister to his chin when he was canvassing Newport; he on one occasion strung the three names of James, Omeny, and Perkins together

"In linked sweetness long drawn out,"

which had such a sort of bridal foreshadowing in it; such a mystic echoing of the future chime of marriage-bells in the very vowels and consonants that composed this triumvirate, that Miss James went off into impromptu hysterics; and the gardener had to be despatched to Seidlitz Lodge, Turnham Green, for Glauber Rodolphus, two hours sooner than the usual time of his diurnal visit to Concave House.

For about six months Bloom wrote to us punctually every fortnight, after which her letters became less frequent, and were evidently written in bad spirits, though she mentioned having been on a visit to a Madame de St. Florentin, who had hired for the summer the beautiful old *campagne* of *Château de Fontaine Le Henri*, near Caën, in Normandy, of whose *bosquets, pleasaunces, charmilles*, and tapestried rooms, she spoke in raptures. After she returned to Paris, I only heard from her twice; and the last letter, though as affectionate as ever, was very short, and ended abruptly by saying:

"God bless you, dearest Grace and Mirry, and keep you from ever ———." But what it was we

were to be kept from, I know not, as the lines were blotted out, and nothing legible, but

"Your ever grateful and affectionate

"BLOOM BELZONI."

At the end of three months, hearing nothing more, I wrote to her father, entreating him to let us know how he and Bloom were. His answer was speedy, but anything but satisfactory; for, touching his daughter, he wrote as follows:

"With regard to Bloom (what a mockery that name is, and always has been, ever since the poor child was left to wither!) I scarcely know how to answer you. It is true I see a silent shadow beside my own, moving about me; nay, more, it comes when I call, and does my bidding; and that as gently as if it were a spirit, which I think it soon will be, when I say 'Bloom,' it answers (always gently), 'Well, father,' and then I look up, and see the transparency of a fair face; but in vain I look for my child behind it. For three months that she was away, I felt as if either she or I were dead. She is now corporeally restored to me, but I am but half a Jairus, or it is but half a miracle, for her soul seems left behind. And when I ask her what is the matter, she says, 'Nothing, dear father.' Nothing! nothing! nothing! always nothing! Ay, that *is* the echo of everything in this world!"

It seemed that all my sorrows were to come to-

gether—oh! not all—for the Grand Inquisitor, Fate, knows better the science of torture than to despatch us at one blow; no, no, he deals them in succession, and punishes every complaint against his cruelty with a fresh agony. While we were still wondering and fearing all sorts of things from the silence of Bloom, my uncle's letters also grew shorter and less frequent, though never less affectionate or agreeable, and at length came a dictated letter in a strange hand, saying his sight had become so bad, that he was threatened with total blindness, and that he had been ordered to the Mont d'Or, in the Pyrenees, where a certain great oculist of the name of Montholieu, was at that time (with the waters) effecting wonderful cures. The letter went on to say that he, (my uncle,) should have liked to have taken at least one of us with him, but that my Aunt Marley was opposed to this, and so as usual he had yielded; it is true, both my aunts had not only volunteered, but strongly insisted upon accompanying him, but as perfect quiet and peace of mind had been enjoined him, as an essential part of the *régime* he was to be under, this proposition was peremptorily negatived by his medical attendants; so he was compelled to set out on his journey only accompanied by a travelling physician, and Clarence Paulett, (Sir Joseph's youngest son), a fine rattling boy of eighteen, who had been pronounced a dunce at every school he had been at, and afterwards at Cambridge, and consequently had turned out rather above par. Morden

was also to join him, so that it now seemed as if really an hourly growing brazen wall was being erected between us, and home—*home!* I had still to learn that I was of those whom nature disinherits, and that I had no home! It is the peculiarity of youth to either underrate or overrate every misfortune; a precipice yawns before it, and provided there are a few flowers on the margin, it smiles, a passing cloud veils its sunshine for a moment, and it weeps as if the sun itself had expired, and all creation had become an orphan. To hear that my uncle was likely to become blind, was indeed, and would have been at any time, a positive and heavy misfortune; still exaggeration is the tribute that affection demands from grief; and had my uncle's death been announced to take place on a certain day, I could scarcely have felt a greater weight of agony and despair, for like a sponge, the heart can but be full, even if what it imbibes into its every pore, turns out, upon analyzation, to be mere water instead of deadly poison. Grace, who was quite as much afflicted as I was at this terrible news, only more rationally and submissively so, in vain urged upon me all the chances of recovery there were, and that even if our worst fears were fulfilled, it did not follow that it would be perpetual blindness.

"But they are such kind eyes, such beautiful eyes," sobbed I, as my own, which "would not be comforted," still rained torrents.

ey will still be as kind and as beautiful," said as she dried her own quiet tears, "for the hat makes them so, can never be either blind ."

! but he won't be able any longer to see in as how we love him."

d don't you think we can make him feel it, he don't see it, Mirry?"

lon't know, I only know it is barbarous, and able, and wicked of my Aunt Marley to pre- r going with him. I wish she would kill me e, and not torture me in every way as she I have nothing—nothing to love me now, not y poor dog."

may be nothing, but you know I love you, a," said poor Grace, taking my head between er hands and kissing my forehead as she added, les, distance, you foolish child, does not prevent on: on the contrary, I am sure it increases it; r much more (if possible) we have loved dear, generous Uncle Paulett, since we have been in ace, where every one is such a centrast to him, mer and nature; and depend upon it, he loves isses us equally; for, as you know, Mirry, how isses even a poor dog that one loves."

h!" said I, still ingeniously setting aside every- in the shape of consolation, which that great grief, always looks upon as heresy, "that is,

because we always miss what we love more than we miss what loves us."

"Begging your pardon, Mirry, that is what poor dear Mademoiselle de Guilleragues always accused you of doing, namely, going *au-devant du malheur;* for don't you suppose that Uncle Paulett loves us quite as much as we love him?"

"Certainly not," rejoined I, "for he has not the same reason to do so."

"That is no reason," said Grace, whose good heart was early wise with the great wisdom of Gospel-truth, "for does not the Bible say, 'it is more blest to give, than to receive;' therefore, is uncle Paulett more blest than we are; and as there is no blessing without love, depend upon it he loves us, Mirry, for do we not always love the plant we water, and the animal we feed, still more the human being we save?"

I threw my arms round Grace's neck, and promised that as long as I had her I would not be so ungrateful as to be utterly miserable, or to say that I had nothing to love me. But verily, it does not do to bargain with Heaven, or dictate terms to Omnipotence, which soon convinces us that our will is *nul* in its fiats; for, as Mademoiselle de Guilleragues truly used to say, Fate is our lord and master, and like most others, seldom atones for one blow, but by another; and the very next morning, Miss James received an official letter from my Aunt Marley, stating, that I

was to remain another year in her edifying "Establishment," but that as she had already spent a whole year in, in vain trying to make my father hear reason, as she expressed it, she could not bear being separated from Grace any longer, and therefore sent over her maid, who, with Morden, would accompany her as far as Kingstown, where she (my Aunt Marley) would meet her.

This really was too much; I felt the bitter injustice of all these needless separations, it was breaking one's heart into such very small fragments, and piecemeal too: why not dash it down, and by shivering it at one blow, put one out of one's misery! I recalled, or rather drew into one dark focus, all the events of my short life; and for the first time, with that superstition which affliction never fails to instil, I construed the manner of our being taken from our father's house during the darkness of the night, and literally launched upon a stormy sea, wherein we had nearly perished, as a type of our whole future fate. However, I was spared that too cruel parting with Grace, for I was that night seized with a brain fever. Miss James, in this instance, sensibly enough concealed the fact from Grace, knowing she would not go and leave me if she was aware how seriously ill I was. She was therefore only told that I had had a very bad night, and was then asleep, and it would be a pity to run the risk of waking me; and with this, as she afterwards told me, she was deluded into the

yellow post chaise, with Martin inside, and Morden out, that was to convey her to Holyhead. At the end of three weeks, I began to recover; the first object that met my view was Mr. Perkins, he was feeling my pulse with one hand, while he held in the other a large silver turnip of a watch, whose pale face and mine he was alternately consulting.

"Mr. Perkins," said I, looking at him, and then round the room, with that sort of sensible vacuity with which one half recognises objects through the medium of reality, out of delirium.

"Ha, my dear Miss Miriam, like Kean in Richard III., which I went to see last night, I find you are 'yourself again.' I shall be indeed proud and appy to be able to send so favourable a bulletin (or as Mr. Perkins pronounced it, bullatang), to Sir George, though not to alarm him, or lead him to happreend anythink serious. I never said that you ad ad a brain-fever, but merely that you was not quite the thing, but that I soon oped to set you hup."

"Have I had a brain-fever?"

"Why, yes; I'am sorry to say as you ave."

"And where is Grace? I want to see my sister."

"Ha," said Mr. Perkins, with a charitable falsehood, rubbing the closed fist of his right hand round the palm of his left the while, as if he had been blending the lie with a few grains of probability, and a few scruples of conscience, in a mortar: "ha! we

were afeared, my dear Miss Miriam, that your sister might take the fever, and so Miss James thought it better to send her away dooring your hillness, my dear, that's hall."

"Oh, that was right," said I; "but of course she has written to me very often."

"Oh, dear yes," said Miss Flippens, whose thin, long, bleak north-wind looking nose, I now for the first time perceived rounding the point of the curtain of the bed; "Miss James *has a deal* of letters and parcels for you; and there have been *such a many* carriages, some coroneted ones too, to inquire after you, and an odd sort of Irish woman, whom we could hardly prevent from forcing her way up."

"Poor Nelly! and did none of the people in the carriages ask for me?" said I with a smile, little grateful for the miraculous inquiries of the carriages themselves.

"Oh! of course; it was the *company in* them that did inquire for you," matter-of-facted Miss Flippens, who then added, with a ramrod curtsey, and a charming placidity of voice: "but I trust you feel much better, Miss Miriam?"

If one could always be in a fever, or even contrive a sort of portable burn or scald, that one could, however, discard at will, I don't know anything that would be so agreeable as English manners, as there is no cold that penetrates to one's very marrow like them; ice and snow are fools to them, for there is a

glowing reaction in the latter, which you never need apprehend from the former.

"I very much regret to say, Miss Sedley," resumed Miss Flippens, "that all your beautiful hair has been cut off."

"Yes," chimed in Mr. Perkins, rising from his chair, and into Pope:

"Clipped from the lovely *ead* where once it grew!"

"Perchance it now, may make a wig,—or two?" said I, wanting an excuse to laugh, as Glauber Rodolphus in the heroics, was more than my risible muscles, enfeebled as they were, could stand.

"Ha! ha! ha! very good, I howe you one."

"Then if you do," rejoined I, "pray pay me in money, and not by a draft (draught)."

With another ha! ha! ha! Mr. Perkins said he should certainly "tell that to my huncle; and now, my dear young lady," added he, "you must keep quite quiet, for hunfortunately you hare of a very hexciteable *temperatoore;*" for such was the word Mr. Perkins always preferred substituting for temperament.

"But may I not see Helen Penrose? I should like to see her."

"Miss Penrose is gone home for the holidays," said Miss Flippens, in her nice, cool, milk-and-water voice.

I sighed as I asked myself, when would my holidays come? Should I ever go home? What, and

ere was my home? Going to my Aunt Marley—
t was not home; oh, no! even staying at school
s better than that. The Pyrences, the Mont
r: my uncle was there: *that* must be my home,
ugh I had never seen it; and upon this I fell into
roubled sleep, and dreamt I was clambering up
h mountains, and as soon as I got to the top,
ping down again.

My recovery was a slow and tedious procses; for
ther Mr. Perkins nor Miss James knew exactly
r to "minister to a mind diseased." Senna! was
ir only panacea for sorrow. Reader, as a friend,
l from bitter experience of its inefficacy, in cases
mental affliction, I advise you never to resort to

CHAPTER XI.

LOBSTERS, naturalists tell us (and, indeed, if they did not, we might imagine the fact) feel very miserable when they have cast their shells; therefore any lobster reading this work—and why not?—for even if Mr. Cobden were to stew down the army into a *consommé pacifique* to-morrow, still, between the submarine telegraphs, the electro-telegraphic snails, and education from the million, surely, without presumption, one may expect to have at least one lobster for a reader, as well as a whole shoal of crabs for reviewers. Any lobster therefore, I repeat, reading this work, may easily imagine how miserable I felt, left alone without my shell, as it were, at Concave House; but still whatever sympathy he, she, or it may feel for me, I beg them to believe that I had infinitely the worst of it; for *they* not only get a new shell in time, but also get under the rocks in the meanwhile. Now it is true, that I was equally sur-

rounded by *rocks!* but I should not like to have got under them, and it was quite impossible *to get over them*, by any means that generally win ordinary mortals.

I had serious thoughts at one time of Hannibalizing them with vinegar; but there was only one cruet allowed for the whole school, and "what was one among so many?" Till the return of the girls after the vacation, I was naturally thrown into more intimate communication with the four teachers, and like Zobeide, with the calenders, in the Arabian Nights, I was struck with amazement at the similarity of their misfortunes; not, indeed, that they had all lost an eye, or that even one of them had incurred such a disaster; but from what I could glean from their conversation, it appeared that they were all lost Pleiads, never intended to be governesses, and this, perhaps, sufficiently accounts for their certainly not not having been fit to be such. Madame Beccaccia, it seems, was the daughter of a gentleman who had gone great lengths in attempting to discover the longitude, in which, however, he had not been so successful as his daughter had in her discovery of the latitude. But had he succeeded, there was no doubt he would have been one of the first men in England, and then she would never have married Beccaccia, the fencing master, and never have been a teacher in a school: "Certainly not!"

In Mademoiselle de Montmorency's genealogical

tree, the ought-to-have-been preventative to *her* being a governess was an incipient alderman—a sort of mistletoe, I suppose, grafted on this famous tree—who *was to have been* lord mayor, but who, unfortunately, died of a surfeit, accumulated at a civic feast, the very year preceding his own mayoralty; in short, thought I, to quote from one of those delicious burlesques of English history, which the French call *drames historiques,* that are perpetrated at the minor theatres in Paris:

> " Il coule dans ses veines le plus noble sang d'Angleterre,
> Son bisaïeul a été même *deux fois Lord Mayor!*"

"So that I ought," invariably concluded Mademoiselle de Montmorency, *alias* Miss Sally Humphries, as she related the touching little incident of the demise of her paternal uncle, the alderman, "I ought, if right was right, instead of being governess in a school, to be *riding in my carriage;* and not compelled to take a foreign name, to spare the feelings of my family."

"Still," said I, "the Montmorencys are worse off, for *they are driven!*"

I also thought that had the alderman dined with his namesake, the Duke, this would not have happened.

The gentle Flippens, then shooting off with the other lost stars, would announce with a sigh, that she ought at that present time to have been the daughter of a general officer, as her mother had married an ensign in a marching regiment, who had actually

fought and flourished into a company; had lost his pocket-handkerchief and his left ear at the storming of Seringapatam; survived the fever at Walcheren, but had ultimately died of being a Major! on his return home. Poor gentleman! how strong his sense of the ridiculous must have been, to have taken the thing so terribly to heart, instead of living to get over it; but so it was.

Miss Sharpe's greatness was to have descended—or ascended, in the collateral line; passing over her individual head, and settling upon that of her sister, whom it seems had, once at Bagnigge Wells, danced two reels and four successive country dances (to say nothing of Sir Roger de Coverley), with a young gentleman whom she had supposed to be merely an individual in private life—that is, a solicitor's clerk or *such like!* but who turned out to be a real live Lord!—an Irish Peer, in short. As Miss Sharpe was wont to add, modestly casting down her eyes, as if it had been herself, and not her sister, who "had owned the soft impeachment," why should I conceal the base, perfidious man's name, *though he is a nobleman?*—It was Lord Mountflummery.

He proposed, and was accepted the same evening; and so eager did he seem for the marriage, that he insisted upon its taking place that day-week at the Temple Church; and, as you may suppose, we had enough to do *to help get* ready Sarah Jane's wedding things—*and a deal* of expense it put my father and

mother to. Well, would you believe it? After keeping us a whole hour waiting at the church, this base deceiver sent a letter to say his mother had discovered everything, and had sent him out of the country; and that, before Sarah Jane could receive that letter, he should be half seas over to Madeira, but that he never should forget her, or Bagnigge Wells; and that all his life "sharp" would be the word with him.

"Eh! villain!" groaned Miss Sharpe, in conclusion.

"Why, yes," said I, one day, at the termination of this tale of lovely woman's stooping to folly, and finding too late that men betray, "it was too hard of him to give your sister a week's preparation, without a companion to the altar:" still, for the life of me, I could not make out why English people of the middle class should always be ashamed of that state of life into which it has pleased God to call them, by trying in words to make it appear that their original destination was something so very superior to their positive position; while not one of them seemed the least abashed at being so totally incapable of fulfilling the duties of the situation they had undertaken. Indeed, I once had a long, but ineffectual argument with them, to try and convince them, that if one was born a princess, and was reduced to being a housemaid, the latter circumstance could not alter one's birth; and the only thing really contemptible or ridiculous in

llen fortunes would be, the giving one's self
of a princess, and neglecting one's work as a
id; in short, that the filling badly the post
us by destiny was the only real disgrace;
, were the case *vice versâ*, a housemaid would
bit the nearer to being a lady, because she
ried a prince, and was called a princess, as
her habits, manners, and conversation, con-
o be those of a housemaid.

might have spared my breath; the burden of
ng was, "Ah, Miss Sedley, it is a terrible
be a teacher in a school, when one ought to
g in one's carriage!" These women were
striking and practical refutation of Göthe's
1 (at least I think it is Göthe's), "that our
re the presentiments of the faculties that are
e precursors of the things we are capable of
g;" for most decidedly, not one of these four
any alchemy have been transmuted into "a
hough such was their "vaulting ambition."
rhaps, the error arose from a misapplication
; their ideas of being a lady consisted in what
nominated *riding in a carriage!* and mine, in
having the feelings and carriage of a gentle-

ing could be more wretched than the next six
of my life at Miss James's. I did not, like
ret because I was bald, or even like him seek to
e defect by a diadem of such stunted laurels,

as Concave House afforded, nor was there any necessity that I should do so; for Nature, the only mother I ever knew, was fast restoring my tresses, and making them more luxuriant than those I had lost; but the fact is, I was becoming as cruel as Charles the Ninth; and so impatient of my position, that, like him, I used to long to demolish at a blow the head of every ass and bore* that came in my way: a sanguinary propensity, which, I am sorry to say, has rather increased with me than diminished upon a more extensive acquaintance with society. Grace and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues were my only correspondents, for, from the Belzonis, father and daughter, I heard nothing, which made me very uneasy; besides, my serious unhappiness about my dear uncle's eyes, which still prevented his writing to me, and Clarence Paulett's short, scrambling, unsatisfactory letters, were but a poor substitute for those "home newspapers," as Hannah More aptly calls them, that I used to get from my uncle, glowing with that all-pervading affection, which leaves no feeling unsteeped in, or unregenerated by its sanctifying influence, and creaming with that sparkling wit, which, like electric fluid, still illumines the highest, while it penetrates the densest matter. Alas! I had yet to learn that his was a model heart, of which

* One of Charles IX.'s favourite pastimes was carrying a large sword, and decapitating, at one blow, the head of every unfortunate donkey and pig that came in his way—a species of "select" practical improvement upon Caligula's theory.

nature had broken the mould; it was the firm rock-crystal heart of a great man, lined with the fine texture and downy softness of a good woman's. Clarence said in his last letter:

"My uncle's general health and spirits are decidedly better; but Dr. Montholieu strictly interdicts his using his eyes, either in reading or in writing; but he desires me to tell you, Mirry, that the eyes of the heart never grow dim, and he is glad to see with them, that you bear your fate at Miss James's so heroically."

Though I knew this was not meant for "satire in disguise," yet decidedly never was praise more undeserved; for I fear Mr. Perkins was right, and that I *had* a very excitable "*tempratoore*," or perhaps it was, to quote from a still greater man (at least in other people's estimation), that unawares I was continually asking myself poor Bernardin de Saint Pierre's question on his death-bed, and receiving no answer but a sigh, "Que ferait une âme isolée dans le ciel même?"

And without going to the other extreme, what could a poor isolated soul do at Concave House? I was tired of hearing the French Grammar travestied, and the English one libelled (for truth was not yet established into libel by the wisdom of the English Legislature.) I was tried even of the high honour done me, of being deputed to revise and correct the eldest Miss Sherwood's letters to her father in India, although that young lady was two years my senior, and eight years my precursor at Concave House; for, to say the

truth, I found this, like many other worldly distinctions, very dull work, as during the whole course of my having been "genteel letter-writer" to Miss Sherwood, an appointment which I had now held for eighteen months, I had extorted but one good laugh, in the way of emolument, from this anything but sinecure; and that was upon the occasion of one of the letters to Colonel Sherwood from his daughter, submitted to me in the proof, commencing, "My *deer* Papa." I was not before aware, I said, that her father had been such a buck, and a great many more equally admirable and first-rate *mots* about Sherwood Forest, Robin Hood, and Little John, ran through the school, though envy kept us silent as to Friar Tuck.

I was more tired still, of seeing Miss James every day as the clock struck twelve, march into school, preceded by Jemima, with a cup of good, fat chocolate, and a plate of rusks, which, after seating herself at the board of green cloth, she had the inhumanity leisurely to sip before our hungry eyes, while she heard the poetical class. Poetical! did I say? Helicon forgive me! but so Miss James called it, professing herself at the same time *so fond* of poetry—a partiality which was generally suspected by the elder girls (who were very proficient in that branch of natural history, from a course of curling their hair at the curate, and watching whether the officers were attentive at church—to the sermon, I mean), and even by some of the younger girls, to have arisen from the

fact of the P in Poetry, and that in Perkins being cousin-germans. The poetry, then,—since poetry Miss James called it—consisted of "Young's Night Thoughts," and "Thomson's Seasons." Oh! how tired I was of hearing that—

"The lovely young Lavinia once had friends!"

when I was precisely in the same predicament, and mine were now all so far away! It is true, Lady Plantagenet had been very kind in coming to see me, and a great relief and pleasure it was to see her and her charming daughters, for the refreshing difference that exists between well-bred and vulgar people is, that the former are always easy, but never free; whereas, the latter are always free, and never easy. Lady Plantagenet had very kindly repeatedly asked me to go and stay a week or fortnight with them, but I had always had the courage and self-denial to refuse; for I felt convinced that, once emancipated from "Concave House," though only for one hour, I never could return to it. She also very considerately sent me heaps of trout and game; but, somehow or other, the one swam, and the other flew, wide of the mark, as only the solitary wing of a cold pheasant, or a very juvenile trout, ever found its way to my plate at dinner-time, though I must do Miss James the justice to say, she had long threatened to ask me to dine with her, some day, "*as a return!*" as they say in England, for all the game and fruit her ban-

quets were indebted to me for; as poor Nelly, knowing my passion for fruit and flowers, used often to come in state, in a hackney coach, with Jeffs at a respectful distance on the box, and nearly all Covent Garden Market inside.

But Miss James had too tender a regard for my health ever to allow more than a single peach, nectarine, or half a bunch of grapes to tamper with it. Like Queen Philippa sucking the poison, the rest she generally consumed herself. Mrs. and Miss Waltham had also very kindly often pressed me to go and stay with them, and Mr. Waltham, though now a full-fledged M.P., and always greatly pre-occupied, being about to speak on the great Molasses Question, or the great Soap Bill, or some other great bubble of the day, still good-naturedly found time to come and see "his old pupil," as he used to call me, and used to smuggle me in "Atala," the Waverley Novels, and "L'Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin," (oh! faint not, most proper reader, nor consign me to a region which is already over-populated—at least, if only one half have arrived that have been piously sent thither), but he also brought me "Childe Harold," "The Bride of Abydos," and "The Corsair," which last took such a hold upon my imagination, that I got them by heart, and have never been able to get them out of it since.

Judge, then, how additionally I suffered from James, Thomson, and Dr. Young. Such was my writhing sense of the deadly dulness of their daily

aggressions, that I even tried to get up a revolution among the big girls in favour of "The Traveller," and "The Deserted Village;" but here another disappointment awaited me, they one and all refused to petition Miss James to let them supersede Dr. Young's hurdy-gurdy, and Mr. Thomson's barometer; they knew nothing of my favourite Goldsmith, except to ask "Was he the man who had written the abridgment of the 'History of England' in use at Concave House?" and when I said he was, from that moment there was a prejudice against him, which as I said was very unjust, as they did not any of them know one word that was in his history. But still, if they did not know history and those sort of common every-day things, they were deeply versed in the higher branches of science that I knew nothing about—such as the mysteries of cotton-velvet flowers, gum and gold paper, and officers' eyes and epaulettes; for after church of a Sunday, as soon as they had "given in" the text to Miss James, which they were all obliged to write down, we heard no more of the sermon—as the younger girls used to pass the hours from dinner till supper, exclaiming: "Dear me, how hungry I am—*ain't* you?" while the elder ones, though guiltless of Pope, seemed to think with him, that

"The proper study of mankind, is man."

For their questions and answers consisted of such sentences as these:

"Oh! didn't Fitz Pipeclay look lovely to day?"

"Which is Fitz Pipeclay? the third nearest to us on the left hand side of the gallery, or the one nearest the window with a green pocket-handkerchief?"

"No, you silly thing, neither of them; Fitz Pipeclay is the one with the undaunted blue eyes—that look you through, and the auburn whiskers."

"But how do you know his name?" asked Miss Sherwood.

"Why—but now promise me upon your honour you won't tell," simpered Miss Dickens—the dark-eyed victim of Lieutenant Fitz Pipeclay's "undaunted eyes" and "auburn whiskers,"—"for then we should have James's powder, and shot! too I suspect."

Finding the conversation was taking this confidential turn, I was moving away, when Miss Dickens tossing back her ringlets said, with a laugh:

"You need not go, Miss Sedley, for *lor!* after all it must be known sooner or later, for I am sure Fitz Pipeclay won't wait another half year; and even if *Pa* won't forgive me, it's very little consequence, for I've got £10,000 of my own, that *Granma* Hodges left me. Well, my dears, you must know that the second Sunday after I had seen Algernon at church (Fitz Pipeclay's name is Algernon, isn't *it a love of a name?*) going out, I happened to drop my Prayer-book—now you need not look so wicked, Sherry, for I assure you it was quite accidental—Fitz picked it up, and gave it me back with such a look! and such a bow! and when

I got home and opened it, I found his own dear delightful card in it, all *scented* with musk (!) and where do you think he'd placed it? why, just opposite that answer in the 'Solemnization of matrimony' which, to the question of 'Wilt thou have this woman for thy wedded wife?' says, 'I will.' Well, the following Sunday, as luck would have it, it rained, Algernon's friend, Colonel Martinet, stepped forward with an umbrella, which he opened and offered to Miss James, while Fitz Pipeclay offered me one, and in doing so slipped a letter into my hand."

"How very impertinent! Of course you returned it to him?" interrupted I.

"Indeed I did no such thing; *lor*, how silly you are, Mirry Sedley; no one would think you were nearly sixteen and a half."

"Well?" eagerly interrogated Miss Sherwood, and the rest of the auditory.

"Well, my dears," resumed Miss Dickens, "all that remains for me to tell you is, that from that hour my fate was fixed; matters went on like a house on fire between Algernon and me; and if all goes well—" But here Miss Dickens whispered to her friend, whose only reply was, as her very hair grew redder!—

"*Lor!* Mary Anne, but *ain't* you afraid?"

"Afraid!" echoed Miss Dickens, "no, you silly thing, what should I be afraid of?" added she, profanely quoting Scripture. "Don't you know that 'perfect love casteth out fear,' as Mr. Musgrave,

your handsome curate, tells us, for he's your *beau*, Caroline."

This conversation had taken place in the garden: I turned away down to the pond, with a feeling of very great contempt and disgust, which was both unjust and unkind, as these poor girls were really very much to be pitied, and very little to be blamed; even of trivial external acquirements they knew scarcely anything: and, as for their hearts and minds, they had remained totally neglected; how then should they have a single right principle, or proper feeling, in every human soil? Nature merely sows the seed, be it evil or be it good: but the culture, weeding, and training, she leaves to others: neglected, the very best, though it never can become actual poison, yet will be wasted into a prodigal and unappropriated luxuriance: while the very worst, with proper culture and great care, may be irrigated and trained into a beneficial produce of great value.

From this conversation I, however, learnt one thing; which was, why the young ladies at Concave House were not allowed to receive letters without Miss James's inspection: her prophetic spirit had foreseen that Pipeclay might lurk in every paper, and lovers in every letter. I had also learnt another thing by it, thereby verifying the proverb—that even from the most foolish we may learn something—for Miss [redacted] had called Mr. Fitz Pipeclay "lovely" I had ever heard of "a love[redacted]

man!" and what renders the circumstance more remarkable is, that I have never yet *seen* one. Altogether, I was very uncomfortable, and no wonder; for, as the saying runs, "I had gained a wrinkle," and that is never agreeable to any woman; at one moment, I was on the point of going in and acquainting Miss James with the whole of the Pipeclay tactics; but the next moment, I was deterred by my strong detestation of the odious character of a spy and a tell-tale; and, to say the truth, I had not been rather more than two years at Concave House, without imbibing a little of that prudent English feeling, which always begins when only *others* are in danger, with, "what is it to me?" and ends with, "I had better not interfere, I shall only get myself into a mess." One decision, however, I had even then come to, and experience has since confirmed it; which is, that no one is fit to keep a school for girls who has not, in the first place, been born and educated as a gentlewoman; and who in the next place, is not a mother herself, ay, and the mother of living, growing children too; which opinion was even strengthened at the time by my raising my eyes, and seeing a little girl of about seven years old, of the name of Jessy Fane, tugging away with all her tiny strength, trying to unmoor a little pleasure-boat that was chained to the bank.

"Come away, Jessy," cried I, "you will either fall in, or wet your feet, and catch cold."

"Oh, no, I shan't, Mirry, I have just done it," said she, with another *tug*.

"Now do come away, there's a good girl."

"Well, I will in a moment to please you, only just let me get it undone first, for I don't like to give it up when I have just got the spike out; "and so saying, with another long desperate tug, her little hands lacerated, and her cheeks like scarlet, out came the plug. Away went the boat adrift, and back fell poor little Jessy headlong into the water—also carried away by the current! the other girls, who with Madame Beccaccia were at the other end of the garden,—all began to scream when they heard Jessy's scream, and saw what had happened, and to run in all directions, calling for Tibbs, the gardener. Luckily, female attire in those days was not the amateur balloons that petticoats are in these, and I had nothing on but a straw bonnet, and muslin scarf, which I soon flung off, and myself, into the pond: and though never having learnt to swim at that time, yet having lived in an island nearly all my life, where I had heard so many stories of swimming and diving, and persons being rescued from drowning, that I fancied myself theoretically a sort of honorary mermaid.

"Don't move, Jessy," cried I, as I struck out for the centre of the pond, "try and lie on your back quite still, you are too light to sink, and I'll soon be up with you."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Mirry," sobbed the [illegible] "but you'll be drowned, too; go back—

"Nonsense, my dear child, not a bit of it; I'm delighted to have a cold bath once more, only I should prefer it without duck-weed," said I, laughing, with the intent of diverting Jessy's attention from her own perils.

"Oh! you are right, Mirry, I do float now that I keep quietly on my back."

"Ah!" said I, much relieved by seeing Jessy safely floating on the dense duck-weed, and not a little delighted to find how well I could swim; "depend upon it, Jessy, it is always best to make as little fuss as possible, whether one is in hot water or cold.

"Is it?" said Jessy, innocently.

"Ay, marry is it," rejoined I, sententiously, as I came up with her, and passed my arm quietly round her waist.

"Oh, Mirry! dear, darling Mirry!" said she, now struggling to throw her arms round my neck, "how good you always are to me!"

"Hush!" said I, "now be quiet, or we shall both go to the bottom, for I must take you under my left arm, and that leaves me but one to swim with;" at this the poor child almost kept in her breath, as I turned about with my prize, and made for the bank, where, by this time, Miss James and Miss Omeny, and Tibbs the gardener, were assembled, and also Helen Penrose, sobbing and crying, and the skirts of her frock wringing wet as far as her knees, for seeing me in the middle of the pond, she was convinced I should be

drowned, and had got as far as her knees into the water to try and help me—when Mr. Perkins, to the great detriment of a pair of nankeen tights and pumps, had pulled her out; for it is a remarkable fact, let what would occur in Miss James's "Establishment," that gentleman happened, by the greatest good fortune, but at the same time the merest accident, always to be on the spot, ready to tender his services *profes*sionally.

Although it was a sultry day in August, the water was intensely cold, and from Jessy's weight, my left arm was so completely numbed, that I could with difficulty gain the bank; however, thank heaven! I at length succeeded, and Tibbs kneeling down, stooped over the bank and lifted Jessy out of the water; while Mr. Perkins, who was really *au fond* a most good-natured person, giving loose to his humanity, sacrificed the remainder of his tights, and holding out both hands to me drew me out of the water, a service which I was base enough to repay by splashing from head to foot, perhaps, take it all in all, the most exquisite get up that had ever issued from Seidlitz Lodge; but even this did not damp Mr. Perkins's philanthropic ardour, for breaking off a branch of willow, which he twined round my streaming hair, he said:

"Really, Miss Sedley, you are quite an ero, and has there hare no laurels ere, I must crown you with

"Oh! how cruel of you, Mr. Perkins," said I, with an arch glance at Miss James and Miss Omeny, which sent all the girls off into a titter, "to make any lady wear the willow."

Seeing the "clouds gathering upon Diana's brow" at this wicked speech of mine, Glauber Rodolphus hastened to despatch one eye, as ambassador, to Miss James's cap, and the other as *chargé-d'affaires* to Miss Omeny's wig, as he said with that convulsive, grappling, iron sort of laugh, which people resort to when the case is desperate:

"Ha! ha! 'pon my honor yes—that is, no; eaven forbid! hany lady should wear the willer for me! I should a deal prefer making hany dear cretur wear the horange-blossom," said he, looking Juans and Lovelaces over the corners, as he drew up his collar, and anchored with a lear full in Miss James's eyes; but however she might yield to sentiment, she never forgot scholastic discipline. So advancing towards me with her arms folded, and delivering herself of that portentous a-hem! which always preceded one of the fiats, she said:

"Really, Miss Miriam Sedley, I fear I shall never cure you of that most *ungenteel* and unlady-like habit of giving way to every impulse: the unrestrained movements alone, which this pernicious habit engenders, are very objectionable. Before you jump into ponds, you should recollect that you are not a boy."

"I can't help that, Ma'am," said I, curtly, flinging down the lachrymose wreath, with which Mr. Perkins had encircled my head.

"Besides," resumed Miss James, "you set such a bad example to my younger pupils. There is Miss Jessey Fane, and Miss Helen Penrose, at this very moment hugging you like two young bears. All those demonstrative ways are so very unlady-like."

"Was I, then, to let poor little Jessey drown, Ma'am, because it is not lady-like for a young lady to swim in a duck pond?"

"Certainly not, Miss Sedley: you should have called Tibbs. You should also have despatched Jemima for *profession*al assistance, which, in *my* establishment, is always within reach: and you might, as soon as this very naughty and disobedient little girl was rescued from the water, have expressed your congratulations in a mild lady-like manner, without all this vulgar crying and kissing."

In a tone so humble, that its irony was not detected, I assured Miss James that, should *she* ever have the misfortune to fall into that, or any other water, in my presence, I would act precisely as she enjoined. And Mr. Perkins, who was beginning himself to receive several hostile messages, from the diverse splashes of duck-weed that tesselated his nankeens, here interfered *pro*fessionally, saying, that "with Miss Sedley's excitable *tempratoore*, he should order her instantly into a warm bed—and also Miss Fane and

Penrose," while Tibbs was despatched to Seidlitz
: for a relay of nankeens and white silk stockings
i intrepid owner. I was not at all sorry for the
iption, as, at five o'clock, Mr. Perkins had or-
(*pro*fessionally) some roast chicken and hot wine-
ater to be sent up to us.

lear me," said the ever-moonbeamy and lady-
Flippens, "were you not terribly afraid, Miss
r?"

es, that Jessey would be drowned," said I, as I
l on my side, and fell into a delicious sleep.

END OF VOL. II.

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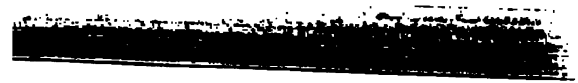

IRIAM SEDLEY;

OR,

THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

BY

ADY BULWER LYTTON.

Heart—Affluence in discursive talk,
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;
* * * * * *
And Manhood fused with female grace,
In such a sort the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked with thine,
And find its comfort in thy face.

ALFRED TENNYSON'S *In Memoriam*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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W. SHOBERL, PUBLISHER,
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1851.

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CHAPTER I.

I AM sorry to say that Helen and Jessy both caught feverish and severe colds, while I escaped with a very slight one, which only kept me a couple of days in bed: but as I knew, by sad experience, that the nursing of Concave House consisted in asking a string of fretting and frivolous questions, whether one was able to answer them or not, leaving one for hours, if parched with fever, without a single beverage—and then one of the teachers gliding in, and asking in that charming, cool, apathetic voice, if you had not had some barley-water? with a codicil of "Dear me! I'm surprised at that, as I took the trouble of myself telling Jemima to *tell cook* to send some up;" and when it did come up, oh! the ineffable mess of muddy-looking,

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be teased with questions; but they

I have seen people, if indeed they could bring themselves to handle a leech, go tut-tut-ing and how tiresoming, all the time, if the leech, like a bad book, would not take, till the poor patient was fairly harassed into an additional degree of fever by these vituperations against the leeches, which might all with justice have been thought, but should not have been expressed.

I remember once having caught a severe cold, and writhing under a maddening paroxysm of tooth-ache; a lady who came to see me, thinking, of course, that I must be deaf, because I had a lambswool Malibran over my cap, by way of making herself agreeable, began talking at the top of her voice; and when I did not answer her, screamed out:

"Do you hear me? Shall I speak louder?"

"Oh! for Heaven's sake, don't!" groaned I, at length removing the handkerchief from my mouth. "I am in such agony, I cannot answer you."

Shortly after, I pointed to a decanter of barley-water by the bed-side, for her to pour me out some.

"Eh! what is it you want? Is it your Prayer-book?"

I shook my head in negation.

"Pray, tell me what it is? for how can I know, if you don't?"

Still I was in such pain, that speaking was an additional torture, that I would not voluntarily encounter. My hand was on the bell-rope, to ring for my maid,

smoked gruel that they called barley-water! I defy a hypocondriacal alligator, used to the slime of the Nile since its shell, to have swallowed it. How few persons are fit to be in a sick room! and what an oversight in education it is, as illness being no respecter of persons, must at one time or other come within every body's sphere; but between the intense ignorance of people not knowing how to do anything, and making a fuss about everything they do do, a poor sufferer is often more tortured by their attendants, than by their malady.

To be of use in an invalid's room, a person should be a sort of deputy Providence, knowing their necessities before they ask, and, above all, doing their spiriting gently: when glasses and spoons are used, they should be instantly, but quietly washed, and left ready for the next time; for nothing fevers and fusses a sick person so much as calling for this, and sending for that, and having to wait for everything; and allowing litter and disorder to accumulate about their room, makes them feel ten times more helplessly depressed. Whatever they are allowed to take, should be brought to them, without worrying them by asking them if they would like it. People, when they are ill, hate to be teased with questions; but they equally dislike being left alone, or having persons fidgetting in and out. If they cannot give up their time, at least for an hour or two consecutively, they should keep away from a sick room.

and tell her it was very ungrateful of her to be so irritable, when everything was done for her that could be done, and she had four physicians.

I knew that it was the irritability of pain, not temper; but those who have never suffered in mind or body, know nothing, and feel nothing. So I began to turn in my mind how the coals could be kept quiet—for it was a burning shame to add to the poor girl's sufferings—and I at length hit upon this expedient, which I recommend for all sick-rooms. I sent for a brazier, who was made to take off his shoes, and come quietly into the room; and then he took the measure of the hearth, and in a few hours made a sort of false hearth, as it were, of block-tin, about seven inches deep, which fitted in under the grate: this I had filled with sand, so that the coals fell noiselessly into this soft bed; and moreover, of a morning, instead of scraping, and raking, and rattling, for ever so long, the housemaid had nothing to do but to draw it quietly out, have it emptied, again filled with sand, and then replaced; when there was a clean hearth, without any noise.

"Well," said the young lady's mother, "I never should have thought of such a thing! *How did you do it?*"

"*By thinking,*" said I.

How different from a dear friend of mine, who is a perfect fireside fairy in a sick-room, and thinks of everything and every one but herself; who knows how

and when to do everything; but then she is not a fair example (though a very beautiful woman), for I'm certain she must have a divining chrystal for finding out people's wishes, and a magic wand for executing them; for in the matter of rare fruits and choice flowers alone, she would set the very seasons, ay, even Thomson's! at defince.

There, H****** W*********, don't, because you happen to be a very distinguished artist yourself, be guilty of the affectation of pretending not to recognise the likeness, in this little *croquis* of mine; however, I shall hope to *see you at length*, and then we'll compare it.

Poor little Jessy Fane being another Indian child, that is a child whose parents were in India, I really felt anxious that she should not be left to the tender mercies of the lady-like neglect of Miss James, and her teachers; and though I was quite well enough to have left my room, I enlisted Mr. Perkins in our cause, for he, as I before stated, was a most good-natured personage, and having told him that I wished to stay and nurse Helen and Jessy, he kindly concocted a *bulletin* for Miss James, stating that from the excite-ability of my *tempratoore*, he thought it advisable that I should keep my room, though not my bed. Blessed with a tremendous memory, I knew the "Arabian Nights," the "Tales of the Castle," the "Comtesse d'Anois," and of course those necessary rudiments of education, "Mother Bunch," and "Mother Goose's" Tales by heart. Judge then, if all the wits of the reign

of Anne, and Louis Quatorze, put together ever were thought half so agreeable as I was by Helen and Jessy; add to which, I had all sorts of personal anecdotes about Monsieur Galland, the Comtesse d'Anois, and Madame de Genlis, thanks to Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, and every one who has had anything to do with children knows their craving for the real "but is it true though?" that is the alpha and omega of their researches. Another proof of the immortality of the soul, that reality alone, that is *truth*, can satisfy it; and life we soon discover at best, or at worst, is nothing but one great fiction, an eternal seeming of things that ought to be, but are not. A little boy of five years old once said to me, after receiving a series of disheartening "nos" to his string of "is it true though?" respecting "Jack the Giant Killer," "Blue Beard," "The White Cat," "Puss in Boots," and "Robinson Crusoe," "Then it seems, *there is nothing true, but the Bible.*" Here was a young sage! to hit upon the only truth the world contains at five years old; who then can doubt "that of such, is the Kingdom of Heaven?"

As I foresaw, the first thing the poor little invalids rebelled against, was, the saponacious-looking mud, called barley-water; but I bribed Jemima to bring me a lemon, a few lumps of sugar, and a kettle of boiling-water, and, by a little additional bribery, I actually got her to stay, and see me make it, for the benefit of the future victims at Concave House.

"Lor, Miss! do you only put a table-spoonful of pearl-barley for that ere great jug, and wash it in such a many different waters?"

"Yes, in twelve different waters, Jemima, till the last water is quite clear, then I put the barley into the jug; and then I wash the lemon well, and rub it with a glass-cloth, very dry."

"Well, I never!"

"After which, I rub about four (not more) ordinary-sized lumps of sugar to it, so as to get off a good deal of the rind. I then throw them into the jug with the barley; and next peel the lemon very thin, so as to leave none of the white pulp on it: the whole of the lemon-peel, I next put into the jug, but none of the juice; then I pour boiling-water on these things till the jug is full, and in half an hour it is fit to drink, being of a bright lemon-colour, but quite clear, and tasting as a fresh lemon off the tree smells, and is so palatable, that it may be called fever champagne!"

"Laws-a-me! and don't you bile it at all, Miss?"

"No; that would spoil it, just as boiling coffee spoils it."

"Well, we don't take all that trouble; we just washes a quarter of a pound of barley once, and after this one renching (rincing) we chucks it into a sarsepan, and puts it on the fire to bile till it's thick."

"And utterly undrinkable," said I, and then pouring out some of mine into a tumbler, and standing it for a

few minutes in a basin of cold water to cool, I gave it to Jemima to taste.

"Lor! well, that is beautiful to be sure! I couldn't have believed that hannythink so hinnocent could be so pleasant. I'm sure, if I was Miss James, instead of letting the young ladies make such a litter with that ere cotton-velvet, and gold-paper, and filagree work, that only looks rubbishy, after all, when it's done, I'd make e'em learn to make nice things to heat and to drink, which would be of some use; for hevery one likes eating and drinking, and nobody cares for gold-paper, and cotton-velvet flowers, except to call 'em "vulgar trumpery," as I heerd Lady Plantagenet say to her daughters, when I showed her into the drawing-room, one day as she came to see you, Miss."

I was rather of Jemima's opinion, and have often and often wondered, why in a country of such decided man-worship, as England, girls in no class of life are brought up to know how to make their homes comfortable. The poor lady who marries a poor gentleman, nine times out of ten, sinks down into a hopeless, helpless dawdle, or a cross drudge; while the husband takes refuge from his slatternly and comfortless domicile in clubs and committees. The tradesman's daughter who marries a solicitor's, or any other clerk, and lets lodgings, allows her house, her children, and herself, to go in rags, while she is belabouring a wiry piano, tricking out her "parlours" with trumpery china, and bazaar knick-knacks, simulating the Paris fashions in

English velvet and mock-lace, or giving thundering knocks at the door, to show that she is as good as her lodgers, I beg pardon, they never let lodgings, that would be vulgar; they merely oblige people by dividing their house, it being too large for them, however small; not that that necessitates them to "receive inmates," they never were accustomed to such a thing, (and so indeed it would appear from their way of going on); in short, they are quite above that, and understand nothing about making bargains till the day of reckoning comes, when presto, they are seized with a confluent attack of shop, which proves at all events, that they perfectly understand *driving* them, and hard ones too, with every aggravated symptom of extortion.

Then go a few steps lower down the ladder, and still the same ignorance, helplessness, false aims, and wrongly directed struggles prevail; the wife with very few exceptions, is either a slattern or a shrew; in short, in one word, she don't understand the art, the woman's art, *par excellence*, of keeping her house together, of knowing how things should be, and then having them as they ought to be; absent buttons, bad dinners, and comfortless rooms, drive as many poor men to the public house, as the same causes make hosts of (so called) rich men loathe the four walls, called home. All men are *tant soit peu épicures*, whether their gourmandise soars into the aristocratic [redacted] a *salmi de bécasses aux truffes, sauté*

au vin de Champagne, wedges itself within the plebeian commonwealth of bacon and beans, or confines itself to the anchorite luxury of a well-dressed potatoe; and as this said gourmandise is all-to-nothing the most harmless of their vices, and the least tyrannical of their privileges, they should most unquestionably be indulged in it. It is seldom that that sex which has no pity for ours, is deserving of compassion from us; but I do pity that unfortunate gentleman most sincerely, whether he be peer, or ploughman, rich commoner, or poor cobbler, who sees everything in his house wrong, and finds everything at his table uneatable.

The barley-water plot, as has been seen, past off with impunity, and having been repeated several times with the approbation of Mr. Perkins, who said I should take out a patent for it, I grew bold, and when Jessy and Helen were able to sit up, and had returned to their normal state, namely, one of ravenous hunger, which certainly the Concave House beef-tea was not calculated to appease, I bethought me of another conspiracy; but surrounded as I was by five and thirty famishing fellow-creatures, I hope the reader has not so bad an opinion of me as to suppose, that I had the smallest coin of the realm remaining out of the ten guineas I had brought to school with me. No, thank Heaven! I had not; and poor Grace had left me seven guineas of hers when she went away, which I did not find till a long time after, as she had put them into a little red morocco doll's trunk, and five and twenty

shillings were all that now remained of that hoard; what was to be done? Helen kept longing to be at home, that she might have fricasseed chicken, while poor Jessy, better broken in to the Concave House *régime*, was more humble, and said she did not care what she had, if she could only *get too much!*

"What do you mean, Jessy, child?"

"Oh! Madame Beccaccia and all the teachers are always talking about our eating too much; and I don't know what it is, so I'm always longing for it."

Helen and I both laughed, and she said:

"Ah! my poor Jess! if you had ever known what it is to have too much, or even enough here, I'm afraid you'd long for it still more."

I said nothing, for I had early in life a detestation of words, when deeds were required, and I was thinking how I could possibly get them a fricassée of chicken. Provisions were dearer then than they are now; besides, I had the maids to bribe; there is no luxury to be had in England without money, more especially sympathy. The first thing to be done, then, was evidently to secure the maids, even if I had to owe some, some few shillings* on the chickens, the cream, and the cox-

* I think I hear some ultra-moral reviewer, or literary gentleman exclaim (*they are all moral in print!*) "A pretty sort of young lady, truly, to go in debt before she was seventeen!" My dear Sir, I am well aware of the difference that does, and no doubt ought to exist between those in every way superior beings, young gentlemen, and those embryo beasts of burden, young ladies; and that though debts at one may be all very proper for the former, it is a monstrous and

combs. I went into the dressing-room—I mean the room where the basins and towels were kept—I turned out the contents of my exhausted receiver (*i. e.*, my purse) into my lap. Matters were worse even than I had supposed (they always are in a financial crisis)—there were only three and twenty shillings and sixpence. Dear me! how I wished at that time (and upon my honour it was the only time I ever was guilty of so great an enormity) that I was the Prince Regent. What a pleasant thing it must be to go down to Parliament, and say, "I want more money!" and what a still pleasanter thing when Parliament *comes down* with the money—though I remember often hearing in those days, that there were great differences existing between the Crown and the Parliament; but I suppose the chief difference was, and is, that the Crown *supplies the grants*, and the Parliament *grants the supplies*; if so, commend me to the latter.

I returned into the bed-room; it was *entre chien et loup*; and in the gloaming, I always had to tell the children a story. Of course, on that evening, I selected the story of "The Rich Miser of Antwerp," for, as Washington Irving truly says, "there is nothing half so magnificent as the imagination of a beggar."

unpardonable thing in the latter. Agreed; but still, my dear Sir, search the voluminous archives of your highly-stored memory, and you will find that even the best regulated young ladies, at a far earlier age, go in debt to the cake-woman at school, and as Miriam's friends were ill, and it was for them, pray don't be *too* hard upon her.

Accordingly, I quadrupled, at the very least, Mynheer von Guilderclutchen's fabulous wealth, for when one does not in reality know where to get a penny, it is some comfort (though a poor one) to draw upon the inexhaustible coinage of the brain. The tale told, I did not find that the tuns, trunks, chests, cellars, and trunk-hose full of gold produced the wonderful effect I had intended, for the *Me* is uppermost in us all, whether we see lovers and churches in the moon, or hear a Popish plot in every pop-gun; so both Jessy and Helen said, almost simultaneously,—

"But you did not tell us what Mynheer Von Guilderclutchens had for dinner?"

"No," laughed I; "I mean to tell you that to-morrow," and here Jemima brought lights into the room, and shut the shutters, after which I way-laid her into the next room, and, after giving her a five-shilling piece for herself, and confiding to her care its twin-brother for the cook, I told her all I wanted, and that I would pay her whatever more the things came to, if she could so arrange everything that I could go down for half an hour the next day, before dinner, into the kitchen. Jemima promised everything, even to borrowing a stew-pan for me from the scullion at the Palace, and an omelette-pan to fry my *croutons* in. So far—so well. I had just concluded my treaty with Jemima, and was preparing to make my ablutions for the night, when a dark shadow fell upon one of the pendant [redacted]. I looked round, and saw that its lawful sub-

stance was what we commonly called Miss Sharpe. Had she been actually "*riding in her carriage,*" and had driven over me, I could not have been more frightened—that is, more startled—than I was by her sudden, though hoofless apparition.

"Good gracious, Miss Sharpe!" cried I, nearly letting the jug fall out of my hand, "how you frightened me, I had no idea you were there."

"Oh! no—yes—that is—I have been two days trying to find an opportunity—that is—I—you—to find you alone, to give you this letter; and if you will have the goodness to put your answer under the stocks in the closet where the back-boards and dumb-bells are kept."

"Has Miss James read it?" asked I, as I took the letter, growing suddenly amazingly proper and punctilious, more, I fear from surprise, than anything else.

"Heaven forbid!" said Miss Sharpe, as she rushed out of the room, like the heroine of a melo-drama, mistaking the noise of a rat in the wainscoat, for the return of the Baron from Palestine, who has, will, or was to have ruined her. What could it all mean? I had not seen any *lovely men!* at church, or dropped my prayer book, or any other hint, that could entail upon me the insult of a letter. I sniffed it, as a dog might a pair of fur slippers, sufficiently suspicious to excite his attention; but it had no odour of Pipeclay—nor

even of musk, (faugh). I then looked at the superscription, the address was all *en règle*.

"MISS MIRIAM SEDLEY,

"CONCAVE HOUSE,

"KENSINGTON GORE."

But the hand was quite unknown to me; I turned to the seal, but that was equally mute, being an owl. At length, like Hamlet with his father's ghost, I resolved to question the apparition letter itself: it ran as follows:

"Dear Miss Miriam Sedley,

"I scarcely know how to word the request I am going to make you, for indeed, our family ought to be so very differently circumstanced; and my dear father is so proud, that I am sure he would rather die than be obliged to any one," (humph! an amiable gentleman thought I,) "therefore what I am now doing, I do, entirely from myself, and as I would not have it known for the world, I trust to your honour not to let any one be aware of the slight favour I am about to ask you, and which I hope to make well worth your while to grant, as I too, like my dear father, am proud, and cannot bear being obliged to any one; but as it may be in my power, materially to serve you during the remainder of your stay at Miss James's, what I am about to ask you, may be considered as merely a mutual

accommodation; you, from always, or nearly always, being last in school of a morning, have upon an average from half-a-crown to three shillings a-week to pay in forfeits, and still more for the hand-screens you spoil, not because you cannot paint quite as well, or better than the other young ladies, but because you don't like the occupation, and therefore, never have patience to finish them properly; now, I shall be very happy to save you all these forfeits for the future, by not reporting you as late, and finishing all the screens, or watch-pockets for you, if you will lend me five pounds!

"Oh! Miss Sedley, don't refuse, on my knees I ask it; for my little sister Margaret has had the scarlet fever, the doctor's bill is a heavy one, a great deal more I fear than five pounds; my mother is afraid to ask my father for it, he has been so out of temper ever since the shameful expense he was put to for my sister's wedding with Lord Mountflummery, which never took place! and I have only two guineas in the world, till Miss James pays my next quarter: indeed, Miss Sedley, I will pay you by instalments of a guinea a month; and pray remember that in my saving you the forfeits, this is only a mutual accommodation, and not a favour that I am asking. Pray—pray don't refuse me.

"Your obedient servant,

"SELINA SHARPE."

"P.S.—I shall anxiously look under the stocks for

your answer to-morrow morning—if you will have the goodness to place it there in the closet with the dumb-bells."

I don't know when I had experienced such a medley of opposing feelings as in the perusal of this letter: I was, I own, greatly and heartily disgusted at its servile meanness, and at the same time its cold, false, vulgar pride—the whole thing was so contrary to what I had seen and been taught upon the chapter of helping our fellow-creatures. Mademoiselle de Grillemagne's precept and my uncle's practice was, "When you ask if it is only for a glass of water, ask it with a frank cordiality of manner that shall evince the truest demand into a service service to you in the time, which will not only oblige the person who receives it, but will make them really wish they had the power of serving you in a greater extent, as you have raised them in their own opinion, and showed you thought well of them by your manner of asking them a favour. For the manner is everything." Indeed it is: "but when you give, as it were a kingdom, make it more so, by doing it as if it were but a glass of water, and by so doing you will double the value of the service: keep to yourself whatever trouble or sacrifice it may have cost you, for when we receive we should be silent—but when we receive we should be eloquent, or else we [illegible] to accept."

[illegible] was the doctrine Christ taught

before you practised it; but the nominal Christians of the nineteenth century leave their Divine Master alone in His glory—which is nothing new. Epicurus lived on roots; but the epicureans are all sensualists. I was not only disgusted, but indignant, that Miss Sharpe should think so poorly of me, as to make the pleasure of doing a service, a matter of barter and exchange—nay more, of dishonest favouritism. Oh! Napoleon Buonaparte, thou wert right! we *are* a nation of shopkeepers, and nothing I fear will root this sordid, narrow, selfish buying and selling canker out of us—nothing certainly as long as we hear from our senate, "That the *protection of property* is the chief aim of legislation."

However, the great thing in all transactions is to come to the point, and the point now in question was, that Miss Sharpe's sister was ill, and that Miss Sharpe herself was in distress for five pounds; and there is a sanctity about all affliction that hallows even the meanest mode of expressing it. Five pounds! and I had not five pence in the world! Lady Paulett was in Paris, Lady Plantagenet—Mrs. Waltham—Nelly, they all passed through my mind like lightning; but then it would take time to borrow from them, and Miss Sharpe wanted the money by the next morning.

Where and how could I get it? oh, the Margravine's bracelet, Mr. Waltham's chain, the poor Duke of Brunswick's little enamel watch, of the cherubs with their sapphire and pearl wings—*that* I should

have felt sorry to part with, both for his sake and its own; but how part with them? how get out? It was now half-past eight; in another half hour the girls would come up to go to bed, and I should have to be at the muster; still I must try, Jemima had that good commercial common sense inherent in every individual Anglo Saxon, which has made us collectively the wealthiest people in the world, for we not only know better than any other (the Swiss excepted) how to get money—but what is far more important *how to keep it!* when we have got it: so upon the circulating medium of Jemima's commercial sense, I now began to build; when, as if approving my design, providence at that moment sent her to the door.

"Come in," said I, in answer to her knock.

"Please, Miss Sedley, Mrs. Quince is below, she just looked in to say that she had bought the half of a wedding-cake this morning from the housekeeper up at Lord Sinecures, and if you would like to have it, it's very cheap—only nine shillings and sixpence."

"I can't have it now—perhaps to-morrow—I don't know; but, Jemima, I want you to do me a favour."

"Lawk, Miss! anythink as I can do."

"Well," said I, interrupting her, "as soon as all the young ladies are in bed, and the teachers have all gone down, I want you to go as far as the town—I don't mean London—but Kensington, with me."

"Laws a me, Miss!" almost shrieked Jemima, first flinging up her arms, and then flapping them against

her sides like a bird flapping its wings, "I dusen't, indeed, I dusen't, Miss James would be the death o' me, if she come to hear on it."

"But she shall not hear of it; I assure you I am not going to do any harm, and we shall not be more than half an hour before we are back."

"Oh! it's quite unpossible, Miss; I'll go for anythink with pleasure, but I raley dusen't let you go."

"Then if you won't go with me, I'll go by myself: for go I must."

"Well, Lor! now you frighten me more than hever, for I'm sadly afeard there's one of them young chaps of hofficers in the wind."

I felt terribly indignant at this most servant-maidish suspicion, till recollecting that take the matter which way one would, it certainly did not look well for a young lady, who had arrived at years of indiscretion, to want to issue out secretly from a boarding-school after nine at night, when all her companions were in bed, so I checked myself, and said calmly:

"If you come with me, Jemima, you will see that I am not doing anything wrong."

"I think I see myself, or rather, I think I see Miss James's cap not wanting me to starch it for the next month, and Miss Omeny's wig a standing on end, like hair in a natrel state, and Mr. Perkins a hordering senna and salts permiscus round the school, servants hincluded; thank you, Miss, but you raley must hexcuse me."

Like many more distinguished diplomatists, I now began and ended with "nonsense!"

"Now listen to reason, Jemima; I'll give you a guinea if you'll come with me, but I shall not give it to you till we return"—(no, it would have been rather difficult to have done so,) concluded I, with a sort of *millionnaire* dignity, which, I must say, was in no degree warranted by the actual state of my pockets—"so no more nonsense."

"Well, Lor a mercy me, Miss, there is no saying no to you, you have such taking ways."

"No, no, Jemima, *you have*."

"Oh! but really I'm afeard, I am indeed, Miss," still hesitated Jemima.

"Nonsense! you won't be afraid of the new cap, I shall give you, besides the guinea; and if it fits, pray wear it."

Jemima was vanquished. M. de Lamennais is right: "tout s'achète, parceque tout se vend," and if even a poor ignorant maid-servant's integrity was so easily bought at that time, only think, how dog-cheap a minister's must have been! for *those* were the days of bribery and corruption. How we have improved! for *these* are the days of economy and retrenchment, so that there is little or no more *bribery*, but *en revanche* we have (the Lord John be praised) plenty of corruption!

Madame Beccaccia, now putting her head in at the door, to know if I was coming to prayers,

I said "directly," and then I turned to Jemima to impress upon her to meet me on the first landing of the back-staircase at a quarter-past nine.

"Dear me, it would be no fun though, to meet one of the teachers, and mistake her for you in the dark, Jemima."

"No, nor for me either, to take one of them for you, Miss; and how shall I know it's you?"

"I'll tell you, I'll say nothing: as I'm not fond of darning, that is the soonest mended; and if it's you, Jemima, when you hear any one, say 'guinea pig,' no one else will know what it means, and I'll take hold of your gown, and you shall then tow me down stairs."

Upon this, Jemima went her way, and I mine, first slipping my night-gown and dressing-gown on over my clothes, for I had not undressed.

However pharisaical they may have been, I must do them the justice to say, that they did not "make long prayers like the Sadducees," at Concave House; and as "wash—and be ye clean" formed the part of the ceremony, the "young ladies" were soon in bed. Still Madame Beccaccia lingered (people always do if you want them to go) and with many a sigh, and much groaning continued to hover about a small chest of drawers, that divided her bed from mine. In one of these drawers was a large black wine bottle—it was true it was labelled "dentifrice;" but as the disaffected

(and they were many) were wont to remark, it had "a most excellent smell of brandy;" in short, why should I conceal from my dear and discreet friend, the reader, that which was to be soon, too soon, made manifest to Madame Beccaccia, and even to Miss James herself; this bottle had become a mark for ill-will and invective, as the great and the prominent are too apt to do in small communities, and a conspiracy had long been hatching against it, which had now reached its culminating point: but of this anon.

"Ahem! young ladies, do draw your curtains; I don't wonder at your always complaining of colds; as for me, though it is only the third week in September, I am distracted with the tooth-ache: dear, dear, what terrible pain it is: I must rince my mouth with some "dentifrice." And so saying, she turned her back upon the long vista of beds, in order to open the drawer, when instantly, with the unity and precision of a military manœuvre, every girl in the room was leaning on her left elbow, "eyes right!" watching Madame Beccaccia's movements, who at that moment, true to her name, was revelling in suction; but I, who was the nearest to the scene of action, was surprised to see that near the bottle there was also a small liqueur glass, which had every appearance of being an *habitué* of the drawer, or in other words, like Mr. Perkins, always on the spot *pro*fessionally. This glass, Madame Beccaccia now filled, and the next moment emptied,

swallowing the "dentifrice" most heroically, and making no sign or sound, save a slight echo of her tongue, which smacked of contentment.

"Ah!" said Madame Beccaccia, drawing a long breath, "that has done me good."

"Dear me!" cried Miss Dickens, "I had no idea people could speak with their mouth full of dentifrice."

"Not very well," responded the woodcock, now affecting the inarticulate, and placing her handkerchief before her mouth, as she prepared to leave the room; and she had no sooner closed the door, than Miss Sherwood sprang out of bed, and locked it.

"What on earth are you about?" said I, thinking of my own *escapade*, and not at all liking this preliminary, though there was an egress through the washing-room.

"Hush!" cried she, still with her ear to the key-hole, listening to our fat friend's retreating footsteps; and when she heard the last of them, and the drawing-room door shut-to, bursting into a loud laugh, as she pulled down the bed-clothes, first off of one bed, and then off another, with the exception of Helen's and Jessy's, and added: "Now, girls—now's your time; now or never. Have you got your knives and scissors ready? *Sharp's* the word! as old Sharpe says, when she is telling that endless story about Miss Sarah Jane Sharpe's going to church, only, alas! to be left in the lurch. Ha! ha! ha! as Miss James is so fond of

poetry and Perkins, I wish she heard that;" and so saying, she struck a light.

In answer to this stirring appeal from Miss Sherwood of *aux armes, bonnets de nuit*, all the girls sprang out of bed, either brandishing a pen-knife or a pair of scissors. The mock-heroic of the whole affair threw me into a convulsion of laughter, particularly as Miss Sherwood, the commander-in-chief of the forces, had a peculiarly elegant maid-of-all-work method of training her vermilion locks in the way they should go, by rolling them round pieces of paper at night, and screwing each end of the paper tightly together; so that, on each side of her forehead, they now looked like pyramids of red-hot Lilliputian cannon-balls, while the paper did duty for blank-cartridge.

As soon as every bed had been abdicated, their occupants fell into rank and file of two and two: and Miss Sherwood, then seizing the poker, which she shouldered sword-ways, next gave the word of command, in a tone that even Algernon Fitzpipeclay—Miss Dickens's Algernon!—might have envied:

"To the right about face! Quick march! Present—fire!"

And here they all charged for the head of the room, between Madame Beccaccia's bed and mine, the chest of drawers being evidently the first fortress they meant to attack; but as even neutral ground is not always safe in time of war, I thought it high time to hoist a flag of truce, or, if you like it better, to show the white

feather; for kneeling upon the bed, and holding my pillow up like a battering-ram, with both hands, I cried out:

"For goodness sake, most valiant Buffs, what are you going to do?"

"*Do* for old Beccaccia's brandy-bottle; that is, spill it all about the drawer, so as to make tipsy-cake of her frills and furbelows; and then cut the sacking and cords of her bed, that as soon as ever she begins pitching and tossing, down she will come crash! with the frame of the bedstead round her neck, like a necklace, or a horse-collar (what a job for Glauber Rodolphus!) and then, of course, she'll think that the '*dentifrice*' perished in the earthquake."

"Pray consider what you are about," said I. "Spill the brandy, and welcome; and to show you that I'm as good a man as any of you, I'll help you to crack a bottle with pleasure; but don't cut the sacking of the bed; for poor Beccaccia might be seriously hurt."

"Hurt a feather-bed! hurt—nonsense!" and in another moment, the bedding was on the floor, and "the glittering fore-fex" opening wide, above the doomed sacking.

"Stop—stop, Caroline," cried Miss Dickens, seizing her friend's arm.

"Why surely, Mary Anne, you, who planned the whole affair, are not going to turn coward, or king's evidence, I hope now?"

"Neither the one nor the other, only I don't want you to do it to-night."

"Not to-night! and what's that for, pray?" asked Field Marshal Sherwood of Field Marshal Dickens; "goodness knows when we may get another opportunity. I hate people who are heroes to plan danger, and cowards to face it."

It is well known that F. M. are the two most laconic letters in the alphabet; so Miss Dickens looked pistols, and pipe-clay, but all she said was:

"Caroline, I want to speak to you."

But Caroline furious, turned upon me, seizing me by the shoulder till she really hurt me; and in the struggles of defence, and attack, not only both our caps fell off, but the combs came out of our hair, which now was streaming about our shoulders, and getting entangled in each other's meshes in a sort of desperate game of *rouge et noir*.

"This, I suppose, is *your* doing, Miss Sedley? with your high-flown ideas of practical jokes being vulgar; and never doing behind the governesses' backs what you would not do before their faces: and I suppose you have bought over, with that eternal green purse of yours full of gold, when the rest of us are obliged to be content with beggarly shillings, and sixpences, and not even enough of them. I suppose, I say," she concluded hoarse with rage, "that you have bought over that cowardly fool, Mary Anne?"

"Nay really, Miss Sherwood," said I, trying to disentangle my hair from hers, "if there be any cowardice in our proceedings, I think it is on your part; for this is taking an unfair advantage of me, when you know I *can't return your fire!*"

At this, there was an universal roar, and Miss Sherwood letting go my shoulder, and seizing a pair of scissors from her sister, who acted as her aide-de-camp, furiously severed herself from me, leaving me one of her scarlet locks as a trophy.

"Now, Carry dear, do listen to reason," said Miss Dickens, forcibly drawing her friend aside, where the two commanders whispered together for some seconds, the troops standing (not exactly at ease, for they were beginning to get very cold, and uncomfortable), but with their arms lowered. Whatever the magic words were that had passed between the chiefs, they had the effect of translating Miss Sherwood from Mars into March, for she "went out like a lamb;" and coming up to me, said:

"Mary Anne is right; we had better put it off till another night. I beg your pardon, Miriam, for my violence, just now."

"Oh, don't mention it," rejoined I, putting out my hand, and dropping a genuine tear to the memory of my poor aunts; for I had not seen so good a pitched battle since I left them; "you reminded me of some friends at a distance," I added.

"Where, I should say, they had better keep, if they

use you like Caroline Sherwood," sneered a tall, sallow girl of the name of Hunter, who was the blistering ointment of the school.

"Come, girls," said Miss Dickens, "you must rebuild the woodcock's nest; and Mirry Sedley, I am sure, will sing us a song; a French one let it be, as the war is over."

"With all my heart," said I, instantly sighing forth with great feeling, and expression:

"Où peut-on être mieux,
Qu'au sein de sa famille?"

which I selected as a vent for my own feelings; the delicacy of which was of course lost upon my auditors; for, like the deaths sometimes announced in "The Times," I intended that "*friends at a distance would be pleased to accept this as a notice*" that I was thinking of them.

Pardon me, my public, that I should thus splash you *en passant* with this little Trafalgar-square spurt of sentiment; I who detest your professors of snivelling, from Laurence Sterne and his dead donkey, down to his modern burglars, and their living ones, who bepuff them; for these gentry, after making of the public their Moab (their own literary clique supplying them with soft-soap) seem in every chuckle of their triumphant *charlatanerie* to exclaim with King David, "Manasses, you are mine!" So much thought I, as I arranged my torn collar, for the lady-like demeanour inculcated

at Miss James's: suppressing all feeling, it would appear, does not suppress all temper.

Having enjoined Helen and Jessy to lie still, under the pretext of settling my hair, I went into the dressing-room, where, hastily throwing off my dressing and night-gown, I went to the large wardrobe outside on the landing, where the bonnets and cloaks were kept, and taking down my own, I was soon equipped, first having collected my few valuables, and putting the extinguisher on the candle, I went quietly down the back staircase, which was very dark, there being no moon. The most perilous part of the journey was the having to pass the door of Miss James's sitting-room, the sitting-room which was within the passage opposite the door leading to the great staircase. There came a great din of voices now from within this room; but above them all squeaked Mr. Perkins' falsetto dealing forth the following aphorism, which, for its truth, I shall repeat.

"Depend upon it, ladies," said Glauber Rodolphus, "Imem (Hymen) his the honly hoculest that ever cures love of blindness."

Hurrying past, I ran hastily down the next flight, till I came to the first landing, where I stopped, and showed my sense as a "British female" ought always to do; and as far as conversation goes, always does do, by saying nothing. Not so my accomplice, who exclaimed with more dissatisfaction than discretion:

"Laws-a-me, Miss! instead of guinea pig, it might

have been a whole litter of guinea pigs, and Hampshire hogs too, from the time as I've been a-hanging out to dry like here. I thought as you never would come; you said a quarter past nine, and it has just gone the half hour by Kensington Church."

"Well, the greater reason why we should make haste, Jemima," said I.

"I bleeve you, Miss; and supper a-going up at half-past ten, and a Welsh rabbit, special for Mr. Perkins—rabbit him! I say, with his Welsh rabbits! He's more plague nor enough. If so be *as it is to be*, I wish Miss James or Miss Homany, or both (if he warn't afeard of too strong a dose bringing hon a haction for bigamy) would marry him at oncet, and have done with it; for there's reason in hall things, and rally this courting lasts too long. Midsummer twelvemonth, hall the love was done to lobsters, and cherry tarts; next half-year it was to collops and prawn curries, and this half, it's to pigeon pies, mock turtle, and toasted cheese, till the house hactually smells like a rat-trap; and hall for a little whipper-snapper of a whitebrown-looking potecary! Well, there's no accounting for taste, but if there wasn't another living cretur of the *contrairy sect* hon the face of the hearth for me to keep company with, and Glauber Rodolphus Perkins was a tom-tit, and could be caught for the vally (value) of a pinch of salt, sprinkled on his tail, hI'd be very sorry to defraud a basin of water-gruel of that pinch of salt, as heven the water-gruel would be

so much more to my taste; though hif there his one thing that hi despise more nor another, and can't abide, *it is* water-gruel!"

Jemima having favoured me with this synopsis of her sentiments, metaphysical and matrimonial, respecting Mr. Perkins, and expounded the doctrine of attraction in an inverse ratio, proceeded to unbolt the back door leading into the garden, through which we now issued, accomplishing the first stage to the garden-gate in an incredibly short space of time. Once in the road, I hurried on as if I had broken into (instead of out of) a house, and the emissaries of justice were at my heels, feeling almost as frightened, and my heart beating so violently, that, as we came opposite the Palace gates, I was obliged to stop to take breath.

If I, who was doing no harm, but merely resorting to the only means within my power to try and serve a person, felt so frightened and guilty, merely because I was committing the twin faults of disobedience and concealment, what must those feel who have really done, or are going to do wrong? Poor creatures! if only the former, let them desist; alas! if the latter, let them repent; both will suffice to God, though neither may appease man.

"Lor a mercy me! what hever hare you a-going to do, Miss?" said Jemima, seeing me stop, and thinking, no doubt, that I was going to cross over and brave the sentries.

"I want to go to a jeweller's shop," said I.

"A jeweller's shop! well, I never! You're never a-going to buy the ring, sure-ly! it's for he to do that; and if he don't, he must be a poor, paltry, mean-sperited feller, as bad as Perkins!—one of them ere sort of chaps of which hi'm sorry to say there his but too many; hall for a-getting heverythink out of you, and giving nothink. Don't have nothink to do with him, Miss, hif he is—now don't ee. Though I ham but a poor servant gal, pray be hadvised, Miss, by one has knows the contrairy sect well, and knows has there is never no good to be got of them there sort of close-fisted devils, male or female. A close fist and a ard art always goes together,—that's *my* maxim; and them as is so near, I always wishes further."

I assured Jemima (who, like Dante in his "Inferno," appeared to pass by every other vice with toleration, but to shudder with implacable loathing at avarice, in which horror I most cordially sympathize), and assured her, with an earnestness that carried conviction along with it, that I was not going to buy any ring, and gave her my word of honour that I was not going to commit myself to the tender mercies of any of the "contrairy sect," as she justly denominated them, a vow, however, which the Recording Angel (being probably busy with the late Mr. Daniel O'Connell's at the time), forgot to "register in heaven." Thus re-assured, we crossed over, and Jemima said she would take me to a very *genteel* man's,—indeed, she might say quite the gentleman, as he never gave, or took coppers! and had once

trusted her for six months for a pair of coral ear-rings, and though even *then* she was eighteen pence short of the money, he said it was of no consequence.

"I should just like to know," concluded she, "how many leap-years of Sundays I should be getting even eighteen pence out of Mr. Perkins."

"Do you mean to say he has never given you anything?"

"Yes, Miss; lots of trouble and plenty of pills; and I should just like to have served him as I served them; that is, chucked him out of winder."

"I hope it's not far where your jeweller lives, Jemima?"

"Mr. Hopkins, Miss; not five minutes: that large corner shop, that you see so lit up down yander, Miss, with hall the tea-pots, and thimbles, and watches, and rings, and such like."

Had I really been on the expedition that Jemima at first suspected, my heart could not have beaten more violently, nor my limbs trembled so much, as they did when I stood before the glittering shop-window of Mr. Christopher Hopkins.

"Have the goodness to wait here, Jemima," said I, "and I'll be out in a few minutes."

"And mus'n't hi go hin with you, Miss?"

"No, thank you, Jemima; for it is upon some business of another person's, and I have no right to let it be known to any one."

"Well, but raley, Miss, I don't know has I can l

you go in alone. 'Spose has you should give me the slip through the back door, what hever should I say to Miss James? Hit hisn't Perkins, hI suspect, as could make hup the pill or plaister that could put that to rights. Now, once more, *do* be hadvised by me, Miss; and, bleeve me, has matrimo-ny is a desperate remedy, has don't agree with hevery constitootion, has Mr. Perkins would say, oh! dear no—very far from it!"

Oh! Miss Sharpe, Miss Sharpe! little did you know all the sharp insults you were subjecting me to! and, as I possessed neither your nor your father's pride, I should at that moment have been most sincerely obliged to any stranger then passing who would have given me the money, and prevented my having the additional humiliation of going into that shop. There is something so debasing in selling anything (except one's principles, that, if not exactly honourable in itself, generally procures honours, and, at all events, shows that one *once possessed principles*, or else one couldn't have sold them.)

"No; I cannot let you come in with me, Jemima. But surely you can see through the window whether I attempt to leave the shop by any other door but this one; and if I do, why, then, I give you free leave to rush in and prevent my escape."

"Laws a me! well I spose there haint no help for it. What is to be, must be, as the good woman said when she married her fourth husband the morning her third

was hanged—and serve him right, too, I've no doubt. But lor, Miss! make haste, pray: for honly think of the toasted cheese, and the risk hi'm running!"

I promised all possible expedition, and indeed had she known but all, I was infinitely more anxious to get back, than she could have been to get me back. I suppose I coloured and trembled, and looked, almost as foolish as I felt, upon entering Mr. Hopkins's Panorama of Golconda; for that gentleman, a small wiry-looking personage, with a pale face much pitted with the small-pox, as if Time to get over such an ugly business had beguiled himself by playing cribbage on it; small, sharp, lead-coloured eyes, a very pinched aquiline nose, and dry, dusty dark hair, standing bolt upright from his forehead, as if it had just been galvanized into the model of a porcupine, now came forward, pantomimically washing his hands, and bowing over his counter, half-cringingly, half-impertinently, said:

"What can I ave the pleasure of showing of you this hevening, Miss?"

"Thank you," stammered I, "I don't want to buy anything; I only—that is—could you let me speak to you at the other end of the shop," said I, walking down to the counter that ran across the shop at the farther end, so as to turn my back on the window, and prevent Jemima seeing what was passing within, though she could still see me perfectly, "I wish to know," said I, as soon as Mr. Christopher Hopkins

had also transported himself
producing the Margravine's
bracelet, " what you would g
" In money, Miss, or in ex
" In money," said I faint
had stolen everything in th
dull, yet sharp leaden eyes
bracelet as he took it out
the rudest and most imper
face; and then he said, with
have choked him, as it nearly
" Why, were it the rub
though a tolerably wealthy
ave to decline the purchase
hadequate value."
" Sir," said I, pointing to n
as I retreated a few paces, my
worthy of my aunts, while m
as any axe could have bee
Harry the Eighth or his wort
if you cannot attend to your
forgetting yourself, as to be g
familiarity with those who
coming to your shop, my s
will go to another."
" Oh, beg pardon, Miss; n
you, Miss, quite the contrary
one sees—, in short, Miss,'
maging in a tray for a ma

wiping it with his handkerchief previously to examining the bracelet, "I'll attend to this here matter directly."

I stood with my arms folded, and as I tried to restrain the tumultuous palpitation I was suffering from, I almost fancied I could see the electric fluid of my burning indignation escaping in corruscations round me while I awaited his veto.

"Well, I'm sorry to say, Miss, as I couldn't make any hoffer at all for this here bracelet, as the stones are nothing but glass, and the setting nothing but brass."

Poor Gil Blas! what you must have felt at the perfidy of the Jewel of the Philippine Isles; and what a glow of admiration you must also have felt for the generosity of Camilla, as I did for that of the Margravine at that moment!

"Impossible," said I.

"Quite true, I assure you; we know all is not gold that glitters; but there's not even a particle of gold in this."

"And are these false, too?" asked I, despondingly handing him Mr. Waltham's chain and locket, with a heavy heart; for sooth to say, I had no longer any faith either in gold, or glory; and ever since, there has been a synonymous jumble in my mind between Anspach and Pinchbeck.

"No, these, Miss, are very good gold, and very nice workmanship; I shall be happy to allow you four pounds for them."

"Four pounds! oh, that will not do."

"Oh, I've no doubt, Miss, they cost infinitely more; but in new things it is for the workmanship we charge, and in second-hand things we never give anything for the workmanship."

The Venetian chain the Duc de Bouillon had given me, I had given to Grace. My poor little angels! that for so many years I had hung every night at the head of my bed, almost superstitiously thinking that they *were* what they seemed, and really did watch over me; and the poor kind donor in his grave too! it seemed almost a sacrilege. Oh! in this cold work-a-day stock-exchange of a world, how soon we find out that our heart is the temple of a persecuted faith, in which necessity is always committing sacrilege upon some one or other of affection's most costly feelings, or memory's most sacred relics! There was nothing for it—I drew the little watch from my bosom, undid the small chain of my uncle's and Grace's hair to which it was attached, and in no very articulate voice, said, laying it down on the counter, and pushing it over to him, "And this?"

"Ah! this is indeed a little gem, I don't know as ever I see a prettier thing; two little hangels keeping watch—pretty hidear, very. Well," said Mr. Hopkins, minutely scrutinizing first the painting, which really was exquisite, and then the works through the glass, exclaiming "beautiful!" to the first, "very good, though Geneva," to the second, and finally pronouncing the

sapphires and pearls to be without a flaw,—"Well, I don't mind Miss, hoffering as much as twenty guineas for this."

"I should have thought it cost much more than that?" said I, feeling this low price an insult to the merits of my little watch: for, as far as I was concerned, it was more money than I wanted.

"Ah! cost," echoed Mr. Hopkins, shrugging his shoulders, digging his elbows into his sides, and turning outwards his hands, so as to display to advantage the fine Rembrandt tone of the palms. "Ah! cost, that is a very different thing, Miss; but I doubt if heven Solomon's Temple had been brought to the hammer, six months after its completion, heven by Mr. George Robins, whether it would have fetched as much as the prime cost of the hapes and hivory his Majesty imported from Tarshish."

"Very well—you must have it," said I, taking up the poor little watch and kissing it, as Mr. Hopkins turned his back to get the money out of an iron box; in spite of all I could do to suppress them, two big tears fell on the angel's face; but that was of no consequence, for it is of tears and prayers that angels are made. Alas! that it should take so many of both, to make one!

"Do you prefer it in notes, or in gold, Miss?" asked Mr. Hopkins, with an agreeable running accompaniment of the latter metal.

"One ten-pound note, if you please, and the rest in gold."

"Very good, Miss," rejoined Mr. Hopkins, and the mighty sum was soon transferred to me.

"Good evening," said I, putting down my veil, (which, I am sorry to say, was as green as the wearer,) and hurrying out of the shop.

"Good hevening, Miss, much obleeged to you—shall never look at these hangels, without thinking of the hangel I bought 'em from."

"Lor! Miss, for even's sake make haste," said Jemima, as I rejoined her, "what a time you ave been: I began to think you was a-buying the whole shop."

"I'm glad of it," said I, abstractedly.

"I b'lieve you, Miss, any young lady would be glad to be hable to buy a jeweller's shop: sorry to hurry you, Miss, but the church-clock struck ten while you was at Mr. Hopkins's. Ain't he a genteel young man—don't take coppers, does he?"

No, thought I, with so much brass, he'd have no room for them.

"Laws, a me!" re-spouted Jemima, "Cook will be in a fine way if hi'm not back to the minute; the Welsh rabbit is done; and Perkins above stairs, a fidgetting his watch in and out, to see whether it is supper-time, and a-looking has famished, has if he fed at, instead of physicked, at the parish workhus; for though he is such a poor atomy of a looking ghost of

a leech, I assure you, Miss, he's quite a ruffian at the wittles; heats tremenjus!"

"Well, said I, laughing, "if he has too much to do, he'll find plenty ready to help him at 'Concave House.'"

"I b'lieve you, Miss—shame! hisn't it keeping the young ladies' happetites has sharp as the carving-knives, poor things."

"Not quite, Jemima, for we never cut the joints; it *is they that cut us!* but then to be sure, they come again—and again!"

"Well you've my sincere good wishes, Miss, as their ghosteses may haunt Miss James ater hevery supper has she gormondizes with that ere Glauber Rodolphus, as I hears her a calling on him, when she thinks no body's by. Some says his wife's dead, and some says she hisn't; but hi say hif she hisn't more shame for her; for hi calls it a reglar out and out shame, for hany decent woman to surwive labelling herself with the name of sich a feller as that Glauber; that's the name of the salts, Miss, hisn't it? so I s'pose he'd only a physic bottle to his god-father,—and—"

"Oh! thank heaven! here we are," said I, cutting short Jemima's memoirs of Mr. Perkins, whom it was evident, was far from being as great a favourite with her, as he was with her mistress.

"You may say, thank eaven, Miss," said she unlocking the gate.

"Now, Jemima, I'll get up stairs as fast as I can, and only have the goodness to bring me my writing-desk out of the school-room, up into the washing-room, and a light, and I'll give you what I promised you."

"Oh! thank you, Miss, but there's no call to hurry about that."

No, it is a remarkable fact among all classes, that people never *are* in want of money when you are going to pay it, or to give it to them; but if you won't or can't do so, *then* it is astonishing the urgent need they are in for it; so much so, indeed, that Shylock was a philanthropist and spendthrift compared to them.

It was not till Jemima had brought me the light, and disencumbered me of my things, and that I had drank a glass of water, that I could really believe that I had got safe back, without detection or disaster.

"There, Jemima, is the guinea I promised you; and half-a-guinea to get yourself a cap."

"Lor! Miss, I am sure I'm very much obliged to you; and now that I know what it his, and that it haint raley nothink wrong, I shall be very happy, Miss, to help you get hout when hever you like."

"Thank you, Jemima, but I shall not trouble you again," said I, smiling to think how instantaneously gold stops teeth, tongues, and consciences; and, though I am sure Jemima was perfectly sincere in offering to

play Grand Vizier to my Caliph Haroun Alraschid, yet had I felt inclined for any more nocturnal perambulations—which, Heaven knows, I was not—I really could not afford it.

After Jemima's departure, and another glass of water, I hastily wrote the following letter to Miss Sharpe, inclosing the £10 note in it:

"Dear Miss Sharpe,

"I feel extremely sorry to hear of your little sister's illness, though I trust she is by this time well over it. Not knowing what she would like, in the way of books or toys, I hope she will choose some for herself, and accept them from me.

"I feel hurt that you should put a condition to my rendering you any little service in my power: I think it so very natural that people *should* help one another, when they can; it is to me the greatest pleasure any one can procure me, and it is time enough to refuse, when one is really unfortunate enough not to have it in one's power: besides, I am sure you would do the same for me. Therefore, I beg to assure you, that you owe me nothing; and I shall feel seriously hurt if you ever allude to this subject again.

"Above all, do not fail to report me late, when I am late. Don't screen me by your talents. I hate favouritism, because it cannot exist without injustice.

"Hoping soon to hear that your sister is quite convalescent,

"Believe me, dear Miss Sharpe,

"Your much obliged

MIRIAM SEDLEY."

Having undressed, folded, sealed, and directed my letter, I put out the light, and crept softly back to bed, where I had the pleasure of hearing all the late insurgents fast asleep; a good example that I soon followed, without, I hope, making such a noise about it.

CHAPTER II.

The next morning, I woke early. My first feeling was an uncomfortable one. I mechanically put my hand under the pillow for my watch, to see what o'clock it was; and then I knew why I was uncomfortable. Indeed, to some who are the elect of misfortune, waking is a kind of daily process of looking upon one's scaffold: however, it is still some consolation if, like poor Chénier, when opposite to his, (we cannot indeed) put our hand on our head, as he did, but on our heart, and say with him,

"Pourtant j'avais quelque chose là!"

for that something never leaves us, even in death; as it is *the us* that continues on into infinity—the deep, murmuring river, that rolls over much that is turbid

and rugged, till it eventually reaches, and is purified in the great ocean of Eternal Light!

For a wonder, I was up and dressed the first that day; for I was in a hurry to place the letter under the stocks, in the closet with the dumb-bells, as that was the *poste restante* which Miss Sharpe had specified. It was the first time I had ever beheld the school-room at early morn, and I must say I have often, before and since, seen views that I admired more; for there is certainly nothing very picturesque in straight rows of green-baize covered benches, rising in their mute spirit of emulation one above the other. Even a Dutch imagination (if there is such a thing) could not have fancied them into sloping banks of verdant moss. Then the great, long, cold-looking table, running down the room, with the cloth laid for breakfast, looking like an interminable plain of snow, with its miniature Alps of blue mugs, to say nothing of the Tyrol of Jung Fraus, that would soon be perceptible; and the three square pieces of bread, upon which butter, like Cardinal de Beaufort, had "died and made no sign;" all of which squares put together, a single *Dent du Midi* might have demolished at a bite. Then the great, high, green fender, imprisoning, as it were, the very elements; and the little, cold, smoky, feeble fire, just lit, not a Promethean-looking spark in the whole grate, any more than in the young ladies whom it was intended to warm. Then, on each side of it, the two dissecting tables of the four teachers, strewed with the

offal of dog's-eared grammars, spelling-books, and abridgments of history; Dr. Young and Mr. Thomson casting a browner horror o'er the whole, with a small prize volume, bound in green and gold, of Cowper, whom, of course, they called *Cow*-per, pronouncing the first syllable emphatically, like the animal of that name; which, after all, was very natural in such a set of calves. Oh! these Concave House pronunciations! Really Miss James should have kept an aurist, to attend *pro*-fessionally, one's poor ears were so *écorchées* with those colloquial butcheries. Among other elegancies of diction, Chaumontelle pears they invariably called Charmontelle pears, because such is the mispronunciation of market-women and gardeners; but to me, who had lived so many years in the paradise of this incomparable fruit, I could not bear to hear mine old familiar friend called such ugly names.

At length I reached the closet, where the dumb-bells, stocks, collars, back-boards, and other instruments of torture, were kept, and there deposited my letter; after which, I returned to the place from whence I came, namely, the dormitory, varying the route, however, by taking the front staircase, instead of the back, the scenery of which was altogether bolder and more picturesque, as from the summit there was a fine view of the front entrance, with the great hall lamp, and a Schneider on one side, with a tolerably good Cuyp on the other.

Should Mr. Murray like to publish this "Hand-

Book of the School-Room," by the two roads of the front and back-stairs, he is perfectly welcome to it; and the beauty of it is, it will do for any and all school-rooms, teachers and pupils, of course, excepted—upon the present company system. "Excursion tickets to Concave House and back, to be had at all the circulating libraries."

It was lucky that I had got up early, and taken the day in time; for it was, in a small way, destined to be an eventful day to me. In the first place, Jemima had kept her word, and got me the chickens, cream, &c.; and as I was still on leave of absence with Helen and Jessy, I stole down about twelve o'clock to the kitchen, where the cook had obligingly abdicated in my favour, taking with her all her great officers of state, and leaving me the coast, that is, the kitchen, clear, with the whole *batterie de cuisine* at my disposal inclusive of the palace stewpan, and Jemima for aide. The first compliment I received from that young lady was:

"Lor! Miss, how nicely and neatly you does it all, no litter, and no mess; and you don't paw and handle the things as *cook* does but I always thought as frigasee was done with cold roast, or biled fowls?"

"No; to be good, the chickens should be raw, and you see, Jemima, I take off all the skin, and only use the wings and breasts for the fricassée, as you call it; the rest I stew down separately, with a little salt,

mace, and lemon-peel, to make the gravy, which I afterwards mix with the cream and the yolk of an egg, beat up till, when stirred over the stove, it becomes as thick and smooth as a custard."

"And no flour, Miss?"

"Not a grain, and the coxcombs are done very gradually, with the gravy; and now, Jemima, give me a loaf of stale bread." I then cut off some thin slices, taking off the crust, and shaping pieces of bread about four inches long, and three broad, into what Jemima called "aces of spades." When my *suprême* was completed, I made Jemima get the omelette pan to fry the *croutons*, but imagine my horror, when she was proceeding to put a great lump of lard! into it for that purpose: "No, no, Jemima, fresh butter: the best butter, and half that quantity."

"Lor! Miss James would faint at the hidear of the best butter for frying bread."

"It is not Miss James's, or I should not take it; but I have a right to do what I like with my own, as Punch says; and I hate the idea of poisoning people with bad wine and bad butter, because they are defended by the sophistry of a sauce." My *plat* completed, Jemima was in an ecstacy of delight, and having given her some of it to taste, she declared it was—

"A dish fit for a king!"

"And so it should be," laughed I, "considering it was done in a royal stew-pan."

"The very look of it would make one hungry again, if one had just dined; and, has I said before, no fuss, no litter, no mess, no nothink; lor! Perkins would jump hout of his hugly skin (and a good thing too) if he seed it; and you don't look a bit red, nor blowsed, Miss, while the other young ladies get their noses as red as capsicums after they have been stooping down their heads a gumming, and a gilding, and a fixgiging, or whatever they calls it, hover them there screens and match stands."

"I don't get red," said I, "because I don't stoop, nor stand over the fire; you must know, Jemima, I'm very proud of being able to cook, but I have no ambition to look like a cook."

"I b'leeve you, Miss; but lor! I always thinks, somehow, that let people do what they will they always looks what they is. Many a madam his stuck up in a drawing-room that would look a deal more in her place by the side of a dripping-pan; for, after all, I thinks it his the hinside, and not the houtside, as makes people."

"No doubt of it, Jemima," I rejoined. "So now that the tray is ready, have the goodness to carry it up stairs, for I'm sure those poor children are starving."

It never does to exult about anything, no matter how laudable, for the moment you do, that spiteful old beldame, Miss Fortune, never fails to give you some practical proof that you are mistaken; and that as sure

as eggs are eggs, hatched and unhatched chickens never make up the same amount, the only two ways, perhaps, of contemplating the same chimera, which are not six of one and half-a-dozen of the other: we all know that we

> "Never loved a tree or flower,
> But 'twas the first to fade away!"

but my disappointments have extended still further, for in the "sweet South," though I used to devote the whole of my energies to the pursuit, I never tried to catch any particular mosquito—

> "But 'twas the first to fly away:
> I never owed a little bill,
> Which they had promised not to send,
> But 'twas the first (and is so still)
> To plague and dun me in the end!"

In continuation of the working out of this system of disappointments and *mécomptes*, scarcely had Jemima placed the tray upon the table, and uncovered the *suprême de volaille*, than while Jessy and Helen were clapping their hands with delight at their unexpected feast, and I was saying: "*that's* what Myneheer Guilderclutchen had for dinner! and having more than even *he* could eat, he has sent you some of it," who should walk in but Miss James, Mademoiselle de Montmorency, and Glauber Rodolphus, come to pay his diurnal *pro*fessional visit. The poor children stood

suddenly still, and trembled, and even I (I confess it) stagnated into a sort of demi-semi state of petrifaction.

"De-lightful odour of dinner here!" said Mr. Perkins, while one nostril of his experienced nose sniffed *en amateur*, and the other *en connoisseur*, the whole machine turning additionally up the while, as if chemically, that is, *pro*fessionally endeavouring to concentrate the volatile vapour of the aroma, that rose from the dish.

"Pray," said Miss James, with her awful "Ahem!" as she folded her arms, advanced slowly towards the table, and began scrutinizing the *supréme*, as if she had been looking down a well, and was afraid of falling in; "pray, may I inquire what this is? I had ordered a boiled scrag of mutton for Miss Penrose and Miss Fane's dinner."

"Yes, Ma'am," replied I, boldly, seeing that the poor children threw all their dependence into one furtive but imploring look at me; "but they wished for chickens."

"*They wished for chickens!* 'pon my word, very pretty; and pray, Miss Sedley, do you suppose I can afford ortolans every time the whole school take it into their heads to wish for them?"

"Of course not, Ma'am, therefore I bought these chickens, and all the other ingredients for this dish."

"Oh, indeed, you bought them, very obliging of you, upon my word; but allow me to ask you, Miss

Sedley, if you think it fair to take up the time of my cook in making such kickshaws to encourage young ladies in the very worst vice they can be guilty of—gluttony." (Oh! Miss James!)

"I did not take up your cook's time, for I dressed that chicken myself."

"No! now you don't say so!" exclaimed Mr. Perkins, stepping up to me with such unfeigned admiration, as he looked from me to the *suprême*, that for a moment I was afraid he was really going to swallow both.

"Oh! Miss Sedley! Miss Sedley! I blush for you!" said Miss James, putting both her hands before her face; "do you want to be taken for a cook?"

"I don't much care if I am, Ma'am; Plautus was nick-named Asinius, or the Ass, because, poor man, he was obliged to turn a mill; but he was not in reality the more of an ass on that account."

"Ah! Miss Sedley, how often have I told you how very indecorous," (or indeckerus, as Miss James pronounced it) "it is in a young *female* to be always quoting those profane Greek and Latin authors, for Plautus was a Greek, was he not, Mr. Perkins?"

"Ye—ye—yaw—yes," roundly asserted Glauber Rodolphus, reckless of the *alibi*, as he kept his large, round, bottled, gooseberry eyes intently, not to say devoutly fixed on the chicken. "Ah! haw! a disciple of Hesculapus."

"And on that account called an ass!" said I.

"Miss Penrose and Miss Fane, you may commence your dinners, and you, Miss Sedley—"

"Stop!" interrupted Mr. Perkins, seizing a spoon and helping himself to a wing with coxcombs and *croutons, ad libitum.* "Stop! allow me just to taste this dish, to see that it is not too rich for my patients."

It was almost too much for my patience as I saw nearly a third of the poor children's dinner vanish into Mr. Perkins' capacious maw, which he actually wadded with bread, his hand serving as a ramrod.

"Huninpeachable!" said he, at length, as the last morsel disappeared.

"But I am sure, Mr. Perkins, you are shocked beyond measure, that any young lady should so far forget herself, as to go down into a kitchen and make a cook of herself!"

"Why," said Mr. Perkins, with a grateful leer at the *suprême,* (for if men *have* any gratitude, it always takes a gastronomic direction, while their affections take a monetary one,) "you must not be too ard on hour little friend here, for consider, my dear Miss James, that hif Miss Miriam did forget herself, hit was to remember her friends; therefore, I must give it has my hopinion, (always, of course, with doo deference to yours), that such being the case, the means justify the hend! I should say, the hend justifies the means."

Miss James sighed, as if she thought so too, but all she said was:

"Ah! Mr. Perkins, you are too indulgent, too kind."

"Can one be so?" *sotto voce'd* Glauber Rodolphus, with a look of maudlin tenderness that gave a sort of gooseberry-fool expression to his eyes. "Hi repeat it, can one be so, where the appiness or the hanger of the fair sex his concerned?" and seeing that the starch in Miss James's cap and collar, were fast melting into an almost fluid state, he added aloud, "and now ave hi your kind permission to make my little hinvitation?"

"Why, really," said Miss James, "I think a young lady who can so degrade herself as to cook a dinner, is not fit afterwards to dine with ladies and gentlemen."

"Some gentlemen think otherwise," said I, pertly, "for Englishmen are the only gentlemen in the world who ever marry their cooks."

"Might do better, certainly—and might do worse," responded Mr. Perkins, sententiously, and then added, with a loud ha! ha! "the worst think hi see hin marrying one's cook his, that hi should be sadly afeard that in that case, the lady would be hapt *to rule the roast!* hin which hevent a usband's authority his sure to *be dished!*"

"Dear me, you *are* such good company! Mr. Perkins," said Miss James, laughing a tittering second

to Glauber Rodolphus's sonorous cachination, while Jessy and Helen seized that opportunity of helping themselves to some more chicken, least Mr. Perkins, after his laugh, might be again tempted, by his professional zeal, to try by a greater experiment, whether the *suprême* was equally good for them, now that it was not quite so hot.

"Then hif you think so," said Mr. Perkins, insinuatingly, in reply to this compliment, "you won't refuse to make me appy to-morrow?"

Poor Miss James's cheek grew a darker drab colour at the *équivoque* of these cruelly tantalizing words.

"Oh! certainly, any thing you wish," faltered Miss James, whereupon Mr. Perkins turned to me, and said, putting his hand before his mouth, as he had done while ramrodding the bread, only now it was certain troublesome ahems that he wanted to keep within bounds:

"Ahem! Miss Sedley; Miss James and Miss Homeny, aving done me the honer to haccept my humble hinvite to honer Seidlitz Lodge to-morrow, September 29th, with their presence, hit being my buth-day, I ave halso ventered to ope for the honor hof the company hof one or two of Miss Jamses poopils, hi should say, her young ladies, oping Miss Sedley, that you will be one hof the two selected, hand Miss Dickens, the hother."

"I'm sure," said I, "I shall be delighted," which was the exact truth, for I could fancy nothing more delicious in the interminable annals of the ridiculous,

than Glauber Rodolphus celebrating his own and every other goose's *jour de fête* at Seidlitz Lodge.

"It is a remarkable coinsidence," (coincidence), sighed Miss James, pathetically raising her eyes to the ceiling, as if it knew all about it, "that the 29th of September was also my dear father's birth-day, and though he has now been dead many years, yet I always keep it."

"Most haimiable and dootiful, h'im sure," said Mr. Perkins, taking a solemn "dust to dust" sort of pinch of snuff, while Mademoiselle de Montmorency who had not yet spoken, perceiving the affecting turn the conversation was taking, said to me, pointing to the *suprême:*

"That's what the French call a *Beckamel, ain't it?*"

"No," said I, "this is called a *suprême de volaille*, or *poulet à la Condé;* a *Béchamel* is a mince."

"Oh! you pronounce it *Bécheamel?*"

"*I* don't in particular, but every one does, for it is called after the Marquis de Béchamel, who invented it for Louis Quinze, though if honour went where honour was due, which it seldom does, by the bye, it ought instead of a *Béchamel*, be called a *chat botté*, since Puss in Boots was the first who invented that *plat* for the Marquis de Carabas, when he threatened to cut the reapers into minced-meat, if they did not say all the corn belonged to that illustrious personage.

"Ho! by-the-bye," said Mr. Perkins, "there is to be a great Bible meeting at Amersmith to-morrow

hand has Mr. Wilberforce his to take the chair, I thought it might be a pleasing recreation to you, and the young ladies, Miss James, hif we went there first, hand give us a happetite for hour dinner beside : for, for my hown part, hi find nothink makes me so ungry has going to church, hand hall that sort of thing."

"Ah!" said Miss James, "it is no doubt that you hunger and thirst after righteousness."

"Hafter hevery think; for, thank Eaven, I ave a hexcellent appetite, though hi injy a very hindifferent state of ealth."

And mechanically Mr. Perkins, in playing with a fork, abstractedly stuck it into the last piece of chicken that lingered in the dish; and the next moment, it found its way (apparently quite of its own accord, and without any compulsion) into his mouth.

Here Jemima came into the room, stuffing her apron into her mouth, to prevent herself laughing, and addressing me, said:

"If you please, Miss, there's a gentleman below; such a funny-looking gentleman," and here she began to giggle afresh, "as wants to see you."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know, Miss; never seed him before."

"But what is he like?"

"Well, raley, Miss," said Jemima, with difficulty suppressing her laughter, "he's egzacly like one of them ere great baboons of he-monkeys, as they calls a wild man of the woods; and such a queer Hirish

servant has he has got with him to take care on him, I spose: for they come in a glass-coach, leastways the monkey hinside, and the man hout."

"But what's his name?"

"Don't know, Miss; he did not say; all he said was, that he come from your aunt, Mrs. Marley, and he wanted to see you. And then he kept hon saying, 'do you see me now?' and I said, 'oh, Lor! yes, Sir; it's himpossible to be hoff seeing on you;' for thinks I to myself, hexcept the hourang outangs at Brook-green fair, I never seed nothink like you before."

"Do you see me now?" being the open Sesame of Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck's philosophical treasures, I instantly knew it was he; and thinking he might have brought me a letter from Grace, as he had mentioned my Aunt Marley's name, I felt more anxious to see him than any one ever did, before, or since."

"May I go down?" said I, appealing to Miss James.

"As it is a gentleman, I will accompany you, Miss Sedley, replied that incomparable keeper of our conscience, starching up into battle array. I smiled as I thought of that great non-conductor Pinchbeck being treated *en séducteur;* however, seeing, is believing, and the moment Miss James beheld him, she was convinced that she might with equal safety, and propriety, leave me *en tête-à-tête* with this great philosopher, and return to Mr. Perkins.

"Have you got a letter from my sister for me?" said I in a sort of "stand and deliver" tone, without even asking him how he was, since I saw that he was

the same as ever; but without replying to my anxious inquiries, he began leisurely contemplating me through his block-tin binocles, and then said:

"Ay, the outside is all very well, and very like Mrs. Marley; do you see me now?

"The peerless Marcia towers above her sex!"

as the poet says; but when will your intellect tower above your sex's, as hers does? when will that little head be as full of philosophy as hers, eh?"

"When there is room for any more rubbish in it," said I, laughing; "but, Mr. Pinchbeck, have you a letter from my sister for me, and when are they coming back?"

"Do you see me now? I, that is to say, myself—"

("So I should suppose.")

"thought you might like to take the opportunity of enlightening your mind, as to the elevating principle, which is the moral lever of mankind; and universal benevolence, which is the sun, or rather which ought to be, the sun of our social system. All of which you will hear expounded to-night at the Pig and Whistle Tavern, by Professor Boreall Von Echokant, who takes the chair at the 'Thismothetic Viviparous Society.' As they have done me the honour of calling these meetings after me, and also," added he, remorselessly drawing three green cards out of his pocket, without the slightest glimmering of an answer to my question, "I have brought you tickets of admission."

"Thank you; but, Mr. Pinchbeck, have you got a letter for me?"

"Attention, do you see me now? to the wants and feelings of others being the great point to instil into the minds of all classes; and without a proper distribution of wealth, this attention is impossible, because wants cannot be supplied without money. And it is impossible to cultivate feeling, when people put their hands into their pockets, and feel nothing. Consequently, I, that is to say myself, am about to organize a system by which every individual shall be satisfied; they have only in my system to state what they wish for, and I give it to them."

"For Heaven's sake then, do give me my letter, if you have one for me."

"This," resumed Pinchbeck, still paying no more attention to my request than if it had been the buzzing of some rival blue-bottle, who had droned "question! question!" in passing, "this, you will perceive at once puts an end to envy, hatred, malice, and revenge, because by establishing equality, it annihilates injustice."

"And what," said I, "in your system becomes of the desperate inequalities of intellect, personal appearance, and other advantages, within the gift of Heaven alone; the possession and non-possession of which cause quite as many envies, jealousies, hatreds, vengeances, and disgusts, (if not more) as disparity of fortune, and worldly position?"

"Do you see me now? you are young and foolish, and know nothing about the resources of philosophy, and the omnipotence it possesses to bestow all things that are desirable, or desired."

"Then do, for pity's sake, my good Mr. Pinchbeck, if you have a letter from my sister (which you must have; for I'm sure she would never let you come here without one) give it to me at once; pray do."

"My system," recommenced Pinchbeck, with a furious paroxysm of blinking, but without the slightest notice of my urgent and reiterated appeal, "when I establish it in a large tract of country that I have bought on the banks of the Gullgoose river, will so include, comprehend, and prevent the wishes and wants of all mankind, that no one will want to wish for anything."

"In short," said I, despairing of discovering whether he had or had not a letter for me, "your system appears to be merely the present system inverted; as in the latter, no one wishes to want for anything: but what do you call your system, and who is going out to the Gullgoose with you?"

"At present—do you see me now?—I cannot get any one to go out with me, so that I am going alone."

"In fact, then," interposed I, "your system may be called the solitary system."

"But," resumed Pinchbeck, "that highly enlightened woman, Lady Laura O'Shindy (her lord and master I must do him the justice to say, not making the

slightest opposition), has promised to come out (as soon as there are a sufficient number of the natives caught), to initiate the female portion of the community into those elegant accomplishments of civilization with paper and paint, in which she so much excels. By the bye, there is a striking instance of the triumph of mind over matter; Lady Laura is certainly not physically handsome, and yet she writes me word, that some famous painter in Paris, where she now is, has requested her to sit for one of the figures in an historical picture upon which he is engaged, and which is to be exhibited in the Loover (*Louvre*), but I confess my weakness; do you see me now? Beauty"—

"I do see you now, but I don't see any beauty."

"You are probably going to say," interrupted Pinchbeck," that you don't see any beauty that can be compared with intellectual beauty; that is true, but when both are united, as in the case of your Aunt Marley,—do you see me now?—it makes one feel very queer."

"It makes you look so, at all events," said I.

"Ah, I told your Aunt Marley, that if she would come out to the Gullgoose river, I would at once make her queen. There! how should *you* like to be queen of Gullgooseia?"

"Oh! that would entirely depend upon whether *you* were king," said I, with all the gravity so terrible an idea inspired.

"Do you see me now!" said Pinchbeck, actually

opening his eyes for half a second, and then blinking double tides, "I suspect you are a bit of a quiz, Miss Miriam."

"That is very wrong of you, Mr. Pinchbeck; you should never suspect any one till you have found them out; as I'll take care you shall find me the next time you come," added I, though not aloud.

"And that's your philosophy is it: at least your manner of philosophizing?"

"Oh, me, I have no philosophy, and therefore, never philosophize, except in Pascal's way, as I quite agree with him, that 'Bien philosopher, c'est se moquer de la philosophie;' but how," added I, "did you find your way here?" which being interpreted, meant "when will you find your way back again?"

"Oh, my sister, Mrs. Congreve, is in town, and it so happens that Lady Laura O'Shindy's old servant, Dermot, is living with her; and though he never was in London before, he says he knows it very well, and as I always go about in a carriage for fear of losing my way, I don't find that he ever makes a mistake, for he is always on the box to direct the coachman."

"Dermot here," laughed I, at the idea of his officiating as travelling tutor to a cockney-coachman, "how I should like to see him."

"That you can easily do," said Pinchbeck, walking to the window, and tattooing on one of the panes to attract Dermot's attention, who was at that moment in a reclining attitude on the box, leaning his right elbow

on the roof of the carriage, the hand of which was supporting his cheek, while his hat, which was very much on one side, was ornamented with a gold band about the width of the field of the cloth of gold, and surmounted by a cockade that would (at the high price wheat then was), have made a very respectable sized windmill. His livery consisted of a pepper and salt jacket with brass buttons, on which was engraved a large star for the crest, (doubtless a rocket proper—for Congreve); his waistcoat was broadly striped with red and yellow, and altogether looked so full blown, owing to a tremendous shirt frill, which like other great events, "cast its shadow before," that it might have been mistaken for the prize tulip at an Amsterdam show; his small-clothes were black-velvet, but still as of old, indulging in too great a degree of intimacy with his calves, while his stockings, as usual, evinced no servile imitation of the snows of Siberia, nor were his shoes one whit more polished than a Polar bear.

At first, he did not hear his master's signal, as at that moment he was gesticulating violently with his disengaged arm, and pointing energetically first to the right, then to the left, and then straightforward, apparently taking great pains to explain the topographical intricacies of the *locale* to the coachman, who sat stolidly beside him, without turning an inch; but nevertheless, from under his low, flat-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, a still broader grin was visibly stretching his whole face, and displaying his long gums

and short teeth: and while his own fancy was thus evidently tickled, upon the principle of divide and govern, he was tickling the right ear of the off-horse with the lash of his whip.

Upon Pinchbeck's repeating the signal, Dermot was suddenly electrified into the perpendicular, and favoured his master with a military salute; but no sooner did he perceive me, than his hat was off, bowing in the most furiously, friendly, and at the same time deferential manner.

In another moment, he had jumped from the box, but so precipitately, that his hat fell off in the operation; and there being rather a high wind, and the size of the cockade really acting like the sail of a windmill, it set off as hard as it could go, and Dermot after it, doubling his fist at it, as much as to say, "If I catch you!" but for a long time the beaver seemed determined that he should not, and eluded the vigilance of its pursuer.

I had opened the window to see the chase; and when, at length, the hat was stopped in its headlong course by the roots of a Portugal laurel, and Dermot made a dive at it, and recovered it, he began beating it with his clenched fist, and setting his teeth, as he exclaimed:

"Bad look (luck) to you for a Saxon thafe of a hat I'll tache you to give me de schlip anoder time. Take dat, and dat, and dat; and betther manners to you for de future, you big blackguard of tile, you."

And having belaboured his unconscious victim till it was bulged in all directions, he then attempted to put it on; but finding, from the severe discipline it had undergone, that what should have been outside was now in, and so usurped the legitimate dominions of his crown, he again took it off, and with another thump, said:

"Bad look to you! Now dat you are come back itself, sure dere's not de half of you in it."

At length, meeting the pressure from without, as it always is met, either by nations or individuals, by a struggle from within, Dermot bethought him of transferring some of the thumps to the inside of his hat, which he had hitherto so liberally bestowed on the outside, and so at length restored it (like the Russian Government) to an absolute form. When he entered the hall, I eagerly opened the dining-room door, quite as much with the design of affording Mr. Pinchbeck the means of egress as of *pour parler*-ing with his squire.

"Well, Dermot," said I, "I'm glad Lady Laura got over her displeasure sufficiently to give you a character, and enable you to get another place."

"Och! you shee, Missh," replied Mr. Bawn, diplomatically reversing the positions, so as to make his late mistress the debtor for *his* silence and forbearance, as he winked his right eye, and pulled up his shirt collar, "ave coorse, I never let on the rale state of de cashe at her Leedyship's; because you shee, afther all, wheder

we like it or not, she *ish* Irish—more's de pity—and it would have been a dishgrashe to the country, if I had tould all her invintions for schkining flintsh, and den trying to convart de very schkinsh of the flintsh afterwardsh into summer wear for me, by discharging me, not like a sarvant itshelf, but like a goon (gun), bad look to her! for, ash I said to her, whin I coome down out of de schky by a *meracle*, afther dat lasht blowing up, de nexsht time she had a fanchy for shooting de crowsh, I hoped she wudn't load her fire-arems wid futmen, as dere was no wages cud pay one for dat sort of ting, let alone de hoight of starvation. But whin de mistress I'm now wid, said to me:

"And why did you lave yer last plache?" says she.

"I cudn't stand de blowing up, ma'am," says I, "but mild and quite, as if I didn't want to be hard on de plache; you know, mish.

"Well, but washnt Leedy Laura's a good plache? saysh de misthress, purshisting, for itsh astonishing how inquishitive de quality do be about yer lasht plache wihn dey're engaging a sarvint.

"Och! very good, ma'am, says I, for breaking one's shins, by raison of her leedyship's niver allowing a farding's worth of light itself in de hall, or on de schtairs, but a very bad plache for breaking one's fast, ma'am, by raison of de diet being too light entirely for Christians; it might ave done very well for *chimaras*, ma'am—dem tings dat lives on air, for, being used to it, I suppose dese breakquists and dinners of ziphers

and brazes don't give dem de wind on deir schtomachs, ma'am, as dey would us," says I.

I could not help laughing most heartily at Dermot's mode of concealing Lady Laura's faults, and raising her in public estimation. However, the manner apart, the method was about the same as that generally adopted by the *tact of friends!* whose clumsy defence is the worst species of accusation, as it affects to be armed with the search-warrant of truth; whereas the calumnies of enemies are mere burglaries, at least amenable to the laws, even if not always overtaken by them.

"Mr. Pinchbeck tells me, Dermot, that you know your way about London very well already."

"Och! ash to dat, mish," replied he, this time winking his left eye, hitching up both sides of his unmentionables, and wagging his head, as if performing the Selkirk pantomime of "I'm Monarch of all I survey," "it wud be mighty quare if I didn't, when me parents is istablished in Loonun, and English to boot —dat is, won (one) of dem, at laste, and dat de chafe one—I mane me fader."

"I'm very glad to hear," said I, "that you look upon Jeffs as your father."

"And why wudn't I, mish? Now look at here; shure, if I go and buy a sechcond-hand coat,—well, it musht ave belonged to some other person befoore—dat's sartin; but ash shoon ash I've paid for it, it

belongsh to me; do you take, missh? And in loike manner, sho shoon as Misther Jiffs wash paid down by de parshon, and endorshed by de prashte, to my moder, dat moment I became hish soon, do I had formerly belonged to anoder man; and I may say," concluded he, giving a complacent side-glance to his costume, "that I don't tink he'll find me much de worshe for de wear."

"Do you see me now?" said Pinchbeck, emerging from the dining-room with a large warming-pan of a silver watch in his hand; "I must return as fast as possible to town, for I am to meet Professor Von Echokant at "The Pig and Whistle" at two, and it now wants only a quarter. So good bye, Miss Miriam, for the present—for I shall hope to see you early at the meeting—and who knows but you may make a conquest of some of the younger advocates of the system; for, in spite of philosophy, these young chaps are apt to be caught by a pretty face, as flies are by honey; so there's temptation for you!"

"Which Heaven keep me out of," thought I. I was very fond of fun, it is true, but going to "The Pig and Whistle" for it, was paying rather too dear for one's whistle; but, as I said nothing, Pinchbeck returned to the charge with:

"You'll not be later than seven, will you?"

"Not," said I, "unless something intervenes to prevent me;" fully determined in my own mind that,

that something should be my insuperable objection.

"Well, good bye," said Pinchbeck, stretching out one of his skinny talons.

"Good bye," echoed I; "quick! Dermot, open the carriage door, or Mr. Pinchbeck will be very late at his appointment."

"Ahem! you guv it, sur, did you?" interrogated Dermot, stepping up to Pinchbeck, putting up his right hand open by the side of his mouth as he bent forward towards his master's ear, and elevating his left foot in mid air.

"Eh?—how?—what?" re-demanded the latter.

"Ahem! what you wash to bring, sur," responded Dermot, winking with as much energy as if his eyelids had been playing at marbles with his eye-balls, and had been determined to fillip them out of their sockets.

"What — I — was—to— bring?" repeated Pinchbeck, as leisurely as if all the words had been tortoises punctuated with snails.

"The letthur, sur, ye bid me remind you to bring," cried Dermot, no longer dulcifying in a stage whisper, but this time, roaring like a stentor into the ear of a deaf giant.

"Oh!—ay! the prospectus, you mean, for Professor Von Echokant."

"Divil a bit of the protect us from Professor Von Echokant; it's the letthur I mane, sur—the letthur

Missh Grache bid ye guv to her shister; and dat you bid me remind you to bring; and dat you forgot afther all, and dat I made you sinsible about, when we got forment de park, and dat we turned back for, and dat I guv ye wid me own hands, so you must have it about you; unless it's stuck in de bog of all dem bothering protectusses dat ye do be cramming your pockets wid."

"So, then, you *have* a letter from Grace for me, after all! For goodness sake, Mr. Pinchbeck, do give it to me directly."

"Do you see me now? I had quite forgotten all about it; pre-occupied as I am,—about the universal wealth and welfare,—of the great human family! I really have no time to think of, or attend to, trifles."

"In other words," said I, as I followed this great philanthropist to the hall table, where he emptied his pannier-like pockets of charts, maps, and plans of the Gullgoose River, and prospectuses of his system for the regeneration of mankind, and redressing the grievances of the human race — occupying several closely-printed sheets of foolscap, with half a quire of blank paper, left for the subscriptions,—*that were to be*. "When persons impose upon themselves the impossible task, Mr. Pinchbeck, of attending to everybody's business, they never have time to attend to any one's; not even their own."

"Ay, ay, the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers," muttered Pinchbeck, still rummaging for

my unfortunate letter, "all individual relief is wrong, —making a charity of what should be right."

"And as you had not even the charity to give it to me, and I have a perfect right to this packet, I shall assert that right," said I, seizing poor Grace's letter from out a chaos of blueish-looking parallelograms, with a rainbow of different-coloured full-blown wafers amongst them directed to

"THESMOTHETE PINCHBECK, Esq.,
"AT MRS. CONGREVE'S,
"BAKER STREET, PORTMAN SQUARE."

and

"PROFESSOR BOREALL VON ECHOKANT,
"PIG AND WHISTLE TAVERN,
"FETTER LANE."

"Ah—well!" said Pinchbeck, with one of his leathern-creaking smiles, "Miss Grace's letter has been in good company, and I hope it will be able to tell you all about the system."

"If it does," said I, really indignant at the way this professor of benevolence and universal philanthropy had so cruelly turned a deaf ear to my anxiety, and nearly lost my letter besides, "I shall give it, in exchange, a quotation from Dr. Johnson, which is quite fresh in my memory, for it was only yesterday that I read it."

"Eh—what's that?" asked Pinchbeck. "I should have thought old Samuel was still the child Samuel, as far as regards the vast development of modern progress, and could have nothing germain to the system."

"On the contrary, it is most exceedingly *à propos* to it; and, indeed, to all the systems and sects now going."

"Ay! is it so? Then let's hear it; and if it is so, I'll make a memorandum of it, for Von Echokant."

"You could not do better," said I. "Doctor Johnson's exhortation is this: he says—'endeavour to clear your mind of cant; it is positively the prime necessity for all men, all women, and all children in these days, who would have their souls live, even feebly, and not die of the detestablest asphyxia as in carbonic vapour, —the more horrible to breathe, the more clear it looks.'"

"Tut, you little goose, cant is only applicable to religious bigotry and intolerance, and has nothing to do with the system."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Pinchbeck, there may be, and is, a cant of benevolence, a cant of liberality, a cant of justice, a cant of honour, a cant of respectability, a cant of morality (the commonest of all, by the bye), a cant of talent, a cant of patriotism, a cant of loyalty, a cant of simplicity, a cant of independence, a cant of toleration (the cant most in vogue with the intolerant or sectarians), a cant of forbearance, when

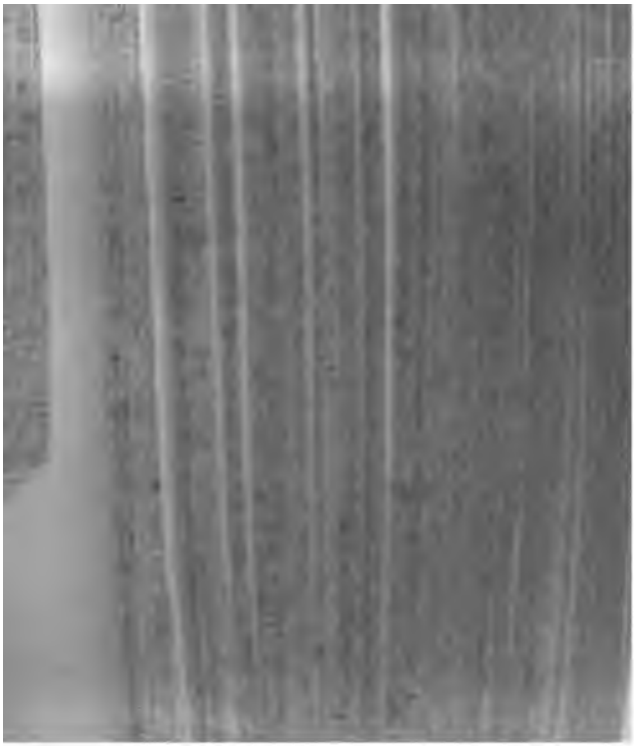
persons know that 'tis *they* who are in the wrong, and to stir in a matter would be to clearly establish that fact. In short, there is a cant in everything, even to the cant of affecting to have none!"

(For I have since lived to discover cant is the *locus criminis* of England.)

At length, thank heaven! the "glass coach," as Jemima called it, drove off with the great philanthropist, Dermot jumping up behind with a *pas de zéphyr*, to show how perfectly *au fait* he was to his footmanic capacity, and vociferating with a sort of theatrical loudness and brevity:

"DE PIG AND ——,"

for the last word he did not utter, but whistled; at which the coachman, with the stolid face, short teeth, and long gums, was again melting away into a broad grin, like a frost wreath in a bright sun, while the horses, seeming to consider this *sul aria* serenade of Mr. Bawns as an especial note of encouragement to them, set off at a brisk pace. I was sorry after the vehicle, that carried Pinchbeck and his philanthropy had driven off, that I had not eased my mind by asking him if he happened in any way to be related to Beccaria, the Italian, who had written so strenuously and pathetically against the punishment of death, as Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had told us a charming little anecdote of him, almost worthy of the universal



it be love; if so, like the Jupiter of Euripides, I must say:

"Of thee, Love, (not Jupiter) I know nothing but the name!"

Of love neither did I then know anything but the name; yet who can live through seventeen summers, and as many winters, and not know that even without love, in every heart there are abysses

"Where deep calleth unto deep,"

and are heard by none but God, and have no answer save their own echoes. Poor Bloom! I gave you plenty of tears; one is so prodigal of them in youth, and never thinks what need one will have of them for oneself in after-life. Grace then went on to say, that she was exceedingly unhappy on more than one account.

"In the first place," said she, "my poor aunts are both dreadfully out of humour, especially Aunt Marley, who says she is sacrificing her life for our interests, and losing everything. In order to understand this, you must know that she is much annoyed at her Paris scheme having been so long retarded, and almost frantic at Madame de Staël having slipped through her fingers by dying last year. I think my Aunt Marley deems it unphilosophical of *la Femme forte de l'écriture*, as dear old Guilleragues used to call La Baronne, but an impertinent friend of mine (also a great friend of

Göthe's) who could not bear Madame de Staël, says that she talked the world to sleep, and so, in self-defence, was obliged to go asleep too, only, that unfortunately, this sleep, like her conversation, will be eternal. However, Aunt Marley is so cut up about it, that when we do go to Paris, she says she doubts if she shall present her letters to Madame Récamier, as she would not give a straw to see a mere beauty. Not so I; and I only wish that Madame Tallien was still to be seen; also, besides the Guilleragues, who is an *habituée* at *l'Abbaye aux Bois*, says Madame Récamier, *c'est la fascination incarnée*. I have a great deal to tell you, dearest Mirry, and I scarcely know how to tell it to you, for it is all about myself. So first I will say, what I know concerns you equally; which is, how unhappy I have been, that during the whole time we have been in Dublin, I have in vain implored Aunt Marley to let me go and see poor papa; it is not only so unnatural, but so wrong, to be within a hundred and twenty miles of a parent, and not to do so; not from affection, for we cannot love what we do not know, but from a mere sense of right: it is a cruel position to be in: *all false positions are cruel*, and when they are prolonged, they not only accumulate, but worse still, I feel convinced there is no getting out of them; and even if we fancy we do so for a time, their seed, like the dragon's teeth, are sure to spring up, armed *cap-à-pie* against us, when we least expect it. Even when I pray for my poor father, the only

image the word "father" conjures up to me, is that of dear Uncle Paulett. I would not, if I could, love him less, but I certainly ought to love my poor father more: and yet that I find impossible, dear Mirry. If you were in my place, I know you would act so much more nobly—that is, so much more rightly—thinking it your duty to go to papa, I am sure no earthly power would prevent your doing so; you have so much more moral courage than I have—you always had; and what as a child used to be called goodness and obedience in me, I begin to think was nothing more than a culpable weakness, which can be swayed by every breath—an excellent qualification for a weathercock, but by no means desirable in a woman.

"For the last three months, Papa has refused to answer Aunt Marley's letters, she had so plagued him about this Gloucestershire property, which he has told her, over and over again, he has irrevocably given to, and cannot take from, Mrs. Penrose; so now it is decided that the day after to-morrow we are to make a descent upon Castle Sedley. Oh, Miriam! how my heart beats at the name of the poor old place! of which I have a vague, but painful recollection, and, though I had not the courage to do as I ought to have done, and as you would have done, yet don't think I am a flint, for the idea of invading the home of one's childhood, and meeting one's father, like a hired Swiss in a hostile army, instead of—if not an affectionate, at least a dutiful child—is too painful; being another galling link of

that chain of circumstances that has been forged for us.

"I shall not, as you may suppose, seal this packet till after the siege of Castle Sedley; and, lest in my greater sins, I should forget my lesser ones, I here read my recantation, and will never call poor old Pinchbeck a bore again (whatever I may think), as he has promised to give this into your hands, which is a piece of special Providence, as it is past franking, and would ruin you in postage. And now, at last, to tell you about myself, which I know, my own dear, kind, true-hearted little sister, will interest you quite as much—not to say more—than if it were about yourself. Mirry, don't blush, but I'm in love!—don't faint: but it's with a Frenchman; oh! but it's only in his manners that he is French, and they are perfection, and as intellect is of no sex, so neither are hearts, I mean *des cœurs d'or* of any country. We met him at the Castle: he is attached to the French Embassy in London, and is making a tour in this country. Everything he does he does well, even to loving me, or, rather, *that* he does best of all. The way he first came to think about me, was hearing me sing that romance of "Velléda," which you know is a sort of *scena*. He says he would have been surprised in England, and was still more so in Ireland, to hear a girl of nineteen sing with so much expression, and pronounce French so perfectly. I rather suspect it was the latter, for—

"Peut-être on aime mieux, quand on sait bien le dire."

"He has great interest with the reigning powers at the Tuileries, and hopes to be sent as *chargé d'affaires* to Dresden in another year, which I should like amazingly; but I see your impatience, you want to know his name, it is Eugène de Maillepré—he is very handsome (really so I mean, not only in my estimation) for he is called the handsome Comte de Maillepré. In knowledge, he is a perfect Erasmus—in wit *à l'infidélité près*—a second Voltaire, and lest you should think that partiality is the author of this sketch, here is a compliment Lord C—— paid him the other evening—a tolerable judge you will allow, he himself being *rompu à la politique de l'Europe*.

"'Monsieur de Maillepré,' said he, 'appears to me to be a sort of diplomatic essence *de mille génies*, for he has all the prompt firmness of Cardinal de Richelieu, which in a dilemma enables him at once to make up his mind, and yet to decide almost intuitively upon the wisest course, without however being at all deficient in the *finesse*, and subtlety of Mazarin, to illude a decision if necessary; while what might be the factious facility or mobility of Cardinal de Retz, is counterpoised by a broad dash of the magnificent and chivalric gallantry of that political nullity, Cardinal de Rohan; but best of all, these brilliant talents are set and bound in that solid and golden maxim of the Duke of Alba: that there is no such fatal error in diplomacy as to think it necessary always to deceive.'

"He says (Eugène—not Lord C——), that he is

very fond of England; but I suspect it is after the Abbé Grégoire's fashion, who said it would be the first country in the world, if it had but cooks and sunshine! the greatest problem he says, he has found in the country, and one he cannot solve, is, *les jeunes misses!* Their freedom of speech and manner astound him; and at the same time, their total ignorance and inanity equally astonish him; he is pleased to be surprised also, though he is too well-bred to use the word—but substitutes *charmé* and *ravi* in its stead, that I am tolerably well read in the past and present literature of Europe, and possess a sufficient quantum of general information, without which there can be no such thing as conversation. I explained the mystery to him by telling him, that for the little I did know, I was indebted to a countrywoman of his, for as Boileau truly said:

"'One learns more from authors* than from their books, and for the same reason we learn infinitely more from the persons who teach us, than from the

* There is no rule without an exception: for there are authors from whose books you may learn something; the said books being a compilation of other people's ideas strung together—for the family of the Borrow-wits is by no means confined to Mr. Planché's charming *petite comédie* of "My Heart's Idol," or to Charles Mathews' inimitable acting. And authors there are, with whom, for one's sins, one may be thrown into frequent contact (for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth), and yet never by accident stumble upon an idea, or learn anything from them—no, not even to be resigned to one's [redacted]!

books by which they teach us; but then they can impart but what is in them, and if there is nothing in them, out of nothing—nothing comes.' Monsieur de Maïllepré is determined to go to papa to ask his consent, for he fears a letter laden with the atmospheric influences of my aunts would meet with no attention; to the latter, therefore, we have said nothing, as we fear that they would either from some caprice not give their consent, or else (whichever quarter their tempers might happen to be in at the time) insist upon our marrying immediately without even apprizing my father, and this you may suppose nothing would induce me to do. But all this concealment, or rather want of any natural protector to whom to appeal, and in whom to confide, makes me feel very wretched. My poor Miriam, ours is a cruel, and I should think, or at least hope, an almost unique position; our affections from the first cut off and turned out of their natural channel, and then again severed from all the courses into which they had flowed.

"Ah! if I marry, you will no longer be without a *real home,* Mirry, for Eugène already loves you; and then we will coax dear Uncle Paulett to come and live entirely with us, and we shall be *so happy!* and we'll ask poor papa to come too, if he likes; at all events, then we may go and see him. Ah! Mirry, you would have loved Eugène if you had seen the expression of his face, and heard the tone of his voice, when I told

him I had nothing, and that my father had either run through or given away everything. He took my hand, and kissing it very respectfully, (for he is so respectful to me, and that is one thing that makes me love him), he said: 'He has not given *you* away, and it is you I want; don't say you have nothing when you have my heart and soul—or I shall think you do not value them; and yet they are the most precious things any one can give, or receive.' Never shall I forget the expression of noble and generous goodness in his fine face, and the deep, pure love, that trembled in his voice when he said: 'C'est toi! seulement toi! est toujours toi! que je veux!' Oh! how selfish this love, this *égoïsme à deux*, as Madame de Staël truly called it, makes one, I am forgetting all the other marriages that are, and are not to be. One thing that makes my poor Aunt Marley so additionally intractable and impracticable at this moment is, that just as she had made up her mind to be Duchesse de Bouillon, or rather to have a *tabouret à la cour*, and had written to the Duc to say that she was ready to reward his constancy, and contemplate marriage under the new phase of a ducal, nay, a royal, ducal coronet; not doubting that there might be a royal road, even to *that* road to ruin. He did not, it is true, do as Leibnitz did, who at sixty, proposed for a young lady, but was put off till the lady could make up her mind: and when she at last did so, in his favour, said:—'I thank you, Madam,

but I have now changed mine.'—but the poor old man merely wrote these few words: 'Helas! chère belle, il est trop tard. Votre dévoué

"'PHIL—'

"But he could not finish the signature as Caumartin, his valet, who forwarded these last words, says that the pen dropped from his hand, and he sank back lifeless in his chair—that wicked wit, M. de Maïllepré, glancing at my Aunt Marley when the news arrived, whispered me,—'*Pauvre cher Duc, il est mort d'un mariage rentré!*' Now for another romance, differing thank heaven! from the beaten track of the Minerva Press. Captain Dapperwit, you remember, *le beau* Dapperwit, the Bayard of aides-de-camp, *sans peur*—except of Lady Laura O'Shindy, and *sans reproche* save from my Aunt Bell, for not marrying her; well, as you know, he proposed for Miss Leah Abraham, and, like a *tyro* in the black art invoking evil spirits, was mortally frightened when he had done it—but Mercury, that god of thieves, (from larceners down to lovers) watched over him, and in due time, instead of the dreaded acceptance of his *billet doux*, it was in a very dignified manner returned to him, protested!

"Oh! the mysterious re-actions of the paphion plague, commonly called love; it differs widely from the other, inasmuch as it is scarcely, if ever fatal, and often breaks out, independently even of money, clothes, or contagion, and so it was with the doomed Dapperwit.

So charmed, and agreeably surprised was he by Miss Leah Abraham's refusal, and the self-respect that it evinced, as well as the convincing proof that it was, of her non-participation in all Lady Laura's coarse, and clumsy plots, that he actually set about falling in love with her in good earnest; and as truth is always sure to prevail in the end (though it unfortunately travels by a *very slow coach*), they are now actually married, and I understand as happy as the day is long. I don't mean now, that the days are shortening, but even in June, when they were at the longest. Fiametta is, I hear from Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, engaged to some Irish Peer in Paris, but from her way of spelling the name, I cannot make out to whom; however, I am surprised at the news, as I always fancied she and Philip Vavasour were in love with each other, as far as either of them could be in love; but I suppose they were only in vanity with each other, which so many people mistake for love. No doubt because they both make people so thoroughly satisfied with themselves, and one more; namely, the whole world.

"They are not to be married till April I hear, Fia and her *fiancé*, and it is to take place in London. I suppose I need not tell you, that both my aunts are as irate at the match, as if the intended bridegroom, whom they have never seen, had been their own especial property. Burglariously absconded with by Fiametta, Aunt Bell's wit on the occasion is, that all

Irish barons should have potatoes instead of balls in their coronets; and all Irish earls, potatoe-blossoms, instead of strawberry-leaves; but I hear the potatoe, or blossom, in question, for I don't know which it is yet, according to Bell's heraldry, has made immense settlements upon his bride elect; and so I suppose it is the cap of maintenance, or jointure, that has tempted Fia, as I hear the lover is neither young nor handsome, amiable, nor clever; however, so it ever has been, is, and will be, world without end—Amen.

"Do you see much of Mr. and Miss Waltham? does Lady Plantagenet continue kind? Are Ladies Fanny, and Lucy growing up as lovely as they promised to be? and have you seen anything of Lord Frederick? I suppose were he to show his handsome face at 'Concave House,' wholesale hysterics would be the result, and Glauber Rodolphus would have to divide, and sub-divide himself into infinitesimal *profes*sional grains. Is little Helen Penrose still at school? If so, my best love, and a kiss to her. Do you still act as quarterly reviewer to that deep-red, though not even light-blue young lady, Miss Sherwood, when every three months she bestows on you a *writership to India?*

"Is the Margravine in England? and has she ever been to see you? I am curious as a point of natural history (of which Buffon makes no mention) to know if she still wards off rheumatism with "riggadoons," repels the advances of time (the only ones made to her

now) with theatricals, and consigns all thoughts of eternity to the dead letter office of eternal display. Few indeed 'know how to grow old gracefully;' but as times go, it is a sort of negative virtue when people don't do so disgracefully. What a string of questions for you to answer; and now to give you breathing time, in order that you *may* answer them, I shall say good bye, dearest Mirry, till after the eventful invasion of 'our fathers' halls,' which haunts me like a nightmare, 'priez pour moi, pour toi, pour lui! Oh! priez bien pour lui, chère petite sœur.'"

"Castle Sedley, in the nursery!
"The poor old nursery Miriam,
"September 13th, 1818.

"Just nine years and three weeks from the night—the stormy night—on which we left it.

"My father is gone, Mirry; no one knows where; he heard (so old Sullivan, the gardener, says) of my aunt's intention of coming, and he and Tom Lutron (who was dining with him) did not, as Sullivan expresses it, 'even stay to finish the wine in their glasses, let alone that in the bottles,' and set off that moment, Maurice following the next day with their luggage; but whither; Sullivan did not know, or at least would not tell, though I rather think it is the former, as I did all I could to make him tell me; and the poor fellow cried so bitterly, that I am sure he would have told me had he known. My poor father! he little

knows, or alas! has any reason to suppose, how I feel for him. I think had I no more feeling than the rocks beneath these windows, the eternal lashing of this maniac sea (so different from the calm, blue, sapphire waves of dear ——) would stir up an equal tempest in my heart; but, as it is, this abomination of desolation sharpens my wretchedness into so keen an edge, that it is almost insupportable.

"You remember the old Irish harp in the hall—at least we both fancy we remember it, from Nelly's constant descriptions—and the old bugle bed-hangings in my poor father's room, too! Well, last night when we arrived, the high equinoxial winds at the front hall door blew open an opposite door at the back; the elements actually made a rush for it, like two conflicting legions of an infernal army. Never, if I live to be a hundred—which Heaven in its mercy forbid—shall I forget the unearthly shriek (for no other word will express it) that issued from that old half-strung harp; nothing I have ever read, in the most horrible of German horrors, could be compared to it; it was as if some unshrived soul of other times, after having been hunted by the arch-fiend through countless ages, had been overtaken by him at last, and driven from out its sole remaining place of refuge! As the doors were shut, the last remaining brass chord snapped with a dull heavy sound, and then all was fearfully silent within—that death-like silence which, from its un-

fathomable intensity, is ten times more appalling than the loudest crash.

"'The poor Masther! that was *his* knell. God rest his sowl, any how! for it's little rest they gave his body,' said old Sullivan, passing the back of his horny hand across his eyes. 'What do you mean, Sullivan?' said I. 'It's not what I mane, Miss Grace—God bless you and all orphans this night!—but the saying's as ould as the harp sure.'

"'What saying, Sullivan.'

"'Why, that when the last string of that harp snapped, the last of the Sedleys in the male line would soon follow; and it's little good that females can do for an esthate, by raison of every one trampling on them, as if they were part of the soil; and only there for that purpose.' Oh, Mirry! I felt so wicked, so cruel, that if I had then known were our poor father was, not all the aunts on earth could have prevented me going to him, even had I had no other conveyance than to cling to the wings of that dreadful storm, and let it sweep me along.

"We went into the dining-room. There was the table, with the half-drained glasses, a pear half-peeled, on one plate, some chestnuts on another, and a newspaper, and the back of a letter beside it; in fact, everything just as if the recent occupants had fled from the overwhelmings of an earthquake. A moral earthquake it certainly is; and these are the worst;

for bricks and stones may be re-constructed, but the inner world, once thoroughly uprooted and overwhelmed, never can be, however brightly the sun may at length burst forth again above the ruin; and however new interests may build up fresh superstructures on the former site, nay, they may be even greater and more enduring.

"*But they are not the same!* and the legend of the past wreck murmurs like a ceaseless sigh through every future scene.

"Nothing can give you a better idea of the disorderly, comfortless tag-rag of an Irish *ménage*, than that in the long interval of four-and-twenty hours these things should be left unremoved. But Maurice had followed my father; and all the rest of the servants, maids included—(for one had to be caught to light fires for us) were *weirestrewing about the village, at the masthers being druv out of house and home, by the shisthers-in-law of him coming back—more wash de pity—afther nine years' pace and quietness.*

"However, the mute reproaches of the deserted dining-room were not without effect. There is, indeed, an eloquence in the appeal of inanimate objects which must be answered by feelings, and not words. Even my aunts burst into tears, as they sank into a chair; and I will do them the justice to believe that they were not all tears of temper.

"When Biddy Carrol, misnomered 'the housemaid,' was at length caught, fires were lighted; I say

misnomered; for a house-maid is a person who takes care of, and looks after a house; and this poor house has evidently had no one, for many a long day, to take care of or look after it. I asked her to show me the way to the nursery. She said it was locked up, and the masther always kep the kay; but that Angus Troil, the huntsman, knew where he kep it, and she would get it from him. She did so—and, oh, Mirry! no description that I can give you, can convey to you even the most remote idea of the scene that presented itself to me, upon the door being opened. In the first place, upon the approach of the light, a whole colony of bats, which had doubtless been in quiet possession for years, made for the broad, old chimney, where, in attempting to eject two owls, they were met with due resistance. At length, thanks to Biddy's energetic exertions, in flourishing her check-apron in all directions, and vociferating, 'Whist! out of dat, ye devils! Ye can't do widout a nursery, forsooth! Maybe it's lading strings and schpelling-books yez will be afther wanting next.'

"The noise they made in ultimately effecting their escape up the chimney, was truly elfin and witch-like, though certainly not witching. When the room was at length cleared, I had space to take an inventory of its horrors, there were not only the very ashes in the grate as we had left them the night we were carried off, and launched on that stormy sea, but everything as it had been left; the ashes it is true were now cold

and frozen, our cots had the bed-clothes turned down —only more discoloured by thick layers of dust, with that greyish, greenish, mouldering hue—like grave-clothes that have been long buried—under your cot, Mirry, for Biddy told me yours was the one next the wall, were a little pair of red shoes—poor little shoes! I excavated them from the pile of dust in which they were embedded, and have kept them.

"I also picked up, near your bed, a little poplar-tree, that I remember perfectly belonging to a box of toys which you had, and at the foot of my cot lay an old spelling-book with woodcuts, and under the one of the 'Fox and the Grapes,' I had scrawled, according to your directions, 'Poor Master Fox!' for you know you always *would* have it that the fox in all Æsop's Fables was very ill-used, till it came to his making use of the goat's horns to get himself out of the well, and then leaving the poor goat to be drowned, when you not only gave him up, but ever after used to stick pins in his picture, when you came to it. An old black bonnet (discovered to be black after the dust was shovelled away from it) was hanging upon a peg: it was Nelly's: there could be no doubt of *that*, for the likeness to this day is striking, so much so, that I every moment expected to hear it speak, and announce, what really was the fact, namely, '*that the back was dropping out of it!*'

"As a suitable accompaniment to the desecration of this primitive temple of our household goods, the little

lozenge-shaped panes were rattling in their leaden casements, as I perfectly remember their doing when we were children, and Nelly used to threaten us with mermaids, syrens, and sea monsters; the mermaids and syrens were still as far away as ever, but the monsters were near at hand, if one might judge by the fearful imprecations the infuriated waves seemed to be hurling against the rocks, and the low hoarse moan that issued from the latter occasionally bursting into the giant agony of a loud yell, as the wind howled round the solitary turret. Altogether, I felt as I could imagine a disembodied, but certainly not beatified, spirit, feeling could it have the power of contemplating the perishing and insentient fleshly tenement it had for ever quitted, not, however, without a pitying sigh of self-exculpation, that no wonder the immortal machinery had worked badly and imperfectly, when so clogged.

"Taking the little shoes, the palm-tree, and the spelling-book with me, I left this sepulchre of our childhood, telling Biddy to have it cleared out, and duly annointed with soap and water, and purified by fire, against the next day, which she has accordingly done, and I am again re-installed here, writing to you, dear Mirry; my conscience half reproaching me for sharing my misery with you at such a distance; and yet I know by myself that where one sincerely loves, it is the heart of what we love that I covet, no matter what's in it, we'd rather, certainly for their sakes, that

it was filled with hope and gladness, instead of sorrow and despondency; still, weal or woe,

> "Is but the guinea stamp,
> The heart's the heart for a' that!"

which is I'm sure what Burns meant when he wrote the line. The mention of Burns reminds me to tell you of the only live author I have ever yet seen, with the exception of poor little Campbell, whom though Heaven only knows, he ought to be hugely grateful for the disproportionately large bouquet of bays awarded him for that very respectable prize poem of his, "The Pleasures of Hope;" yet he has made such a plantation of nettles for himself, with his envy of the chaplets of Byron, Moore, and Rogers, that his eternal whinings never came up to my ideas of an author, and still less of a poet, who, like the device on Alcibiades' shield, should eschew all the emblems of vulgar warfare, and resolve himself into the most omnipotent of all the gods, in the smallest and most concentrated compass, namely, a cupid grasping a thunderbolt. This myth, I take it, Lord Byron has realized; for in the loudest thunders which he wrests from Olympus, the Graces still play around the electric fluid of his tempests, and at his command, gird the terrible with the magic cestus of the beautiful; whereas, the endless irritation caused by the chronic nettle-rash poor Campbell's vanity is always suffering from, makes one long when

he is snivelling sentiment to recommend him snake-root, as being the best antidote to that troublesome complaint, which is also the cause, I suppose, of his wearing that horrible scratch-wig.

"But to return to my other live author, (whom I am going to tell you about, in the hope of neutralizing in some degree the pain I know this letter will occasion you): it is that extraordinary man, Maturin, the author of 'Bertram,' and 'The Universe;' (the latter however, is far from being a stereotype edition of the great original work). He certainly is a man of genius, but I make use of the word extraordinary more in reference to his appearance than to his mind; for he dresses oddly, that is, melodramatically, and dances more oddly, and far more inveterately still, as you may suppose when I tell you, that in Dublin his *sobriquet* is the Archbishop of Quadrilles; however, he has one cardinal virtue, (though not included amongst them), namely, gratitude; for he is most grateful to Lord Byron for the generous and zealous sincerity with which the latter has tried to promote his literary career, and the pecuniary interests arising therefrom; but this, as Maturin truly says, Lord Byron does by every talent, great or small, that comes across his wide path; for it is only your farthing rushlights of literature, or your base metal reflectors, that send forth borrowed light, who think they cannot shine unless they extinguish all others.

"I like him too, for his being so enthusiastically

indignant at the cold-blooded hypocrisy of the lapidation poor Lord Byron has undergone from the Anglo-Saxon Pharisees. Poor Byron! the Marital St. Stephen! as he calls him; for as he truly says, Lord Byron's greatest fault is making himself out worse than he is; but even judging him by this exaggerated and distorted standard, the sentence past on him, and the punishment inflicted upon him at the bar of English public opinion, would be ludicrous, if it were not infamous, from the *uniqueness* of its injustice.

"'In England, where a husband may commit every crime with impunity, (not to say applause), even to those of which the law is supposed to take the most cognizance, view it in which light I will,' continued Maturin, 'I cannot understand it; for when we recollect that marriage is for life, and consider the arsenal of authorized offensive and oppressive weapons that husbands have at their command for the whole of that long and unequal warfare, surely no wife, comparatively speaking, could have suffered enough to speak of, in ten months, and hence no doubt, Lady Byron's silence; but the fact is, Lord Byron was not mean enough to be a thoroughly bad husband, for to attain to that inverse pinnacle of perfection, a man must be both a liar and a coward, and he is neither: on the contrary, he is too honest; and whether the father of his own actions or not, is always their godfather. Had he turned his wife out of house and home, hunted and calumniated her through the world,

separated her from her child, and poisoned that child into an unnatural monster against her, kept her fortune, and open house with it to entertain virtue's moral umpire—the world! not exposed the turpitudes of English society, that is, of the *haute volée*, or summit of it, which arrogates to itself the title of society *par excellence*; all these things had he done, or not done, would he even now, at the eleventh hour, wheel about and reap rich harvests from the wide spread fields of cant, gleaning hackneyed moral axioms and fine sentiments from popular and esteemed authors, so as to suit the national craving for twaddle, he might in reality *be* with impunity the monster which he is now paying so dearly for having the unmerited reputation of being.

"But he has acted, and is acting foolishly in staying abroad; for, like the hunted beaver in the fable, by flying, and yet flinging to his pursuers that valuable portion of him which they alone cared to destroy, in order to render it serviceable to themselves, namely his reputation, he has inflicted upon himself a wound that will rankle and hurry him to his grave, and every murmur he utters only aggravates the evil, for the sympathy of the British public seems to have been cast in the same mould as the laws of the Spanish Inquisition, by which it was decreed an additional treason, and made the subject of a fresh criminal indictment, if [illegible] presumed to utter a complaint; for the [illegible] commercial people, and tears, injuries,

and injustice not being negotiable though justice is they do not comprehend, and consequently do not tolerate them: whereas, pounds, shillings, and pence are not only clearly but tangibly demonstrative to the concrete capacity of the British public, and therefore whichever, or whoever secures and retains these, is always right in law, lenity, and public opinion.' I quite loved the man for his zeal and his enthusiasm, the more so, that M. de Maillepré told me the other day, that with the Greeks, the word enthusiasm meant God within us!—and I certainly think there can be nothing God-like in us without it, as it appears to me to be the sublimated and essential spirit of truth.

"I don't mean to say, that that which we are enthusiastic about is always true; but I do say, that *we* must be pre-eminently true before we can be enthusiastic, for neither doubt nor hypocrisy ever yet engendered enthusiasm.

"Maturin also told me, that there was a noble review in a last year's number of the 'Quarterly' (No. 31, I think he said), of Lord Byron, written by Walter Scott, whom I do love for that same, more even than for all his delightful tales; after all, as fame is their object (I mean good fame), what fools authors are, not to be really as noble and as great as one likes to fancy them—for one is sure, even though they be dead and buried some hundred years, to go prying and poking into *their realities;* and how soon alas! too

many of the enchanted heroes turn into swine at the touch of this Ethurial's spear.

"As children, don't you remember, Mirry, how we doated on Goldsmith and Burke—not on account of their writings which we could not then appreciate, but because of the endless traits of goodness dear Uncle Paulett used to tell us of them both. To this day, *Je me gendarme!* if I hear Boileau sneered at for a mere satirist, because of the many generous and noble things he did disinterestedly and unostentatiously to save his friends—ay, and even his enemies: whereas, Voltaire with all the genius which he most unquestionably possessed, I allow on all occasions to be thrown quietly to the lions, for his intense meanness—I mean avarice (as he had the other sort, too), always floats on the surface of my memory; and I see him in imagination lending his money at usurious interest only to the Villars, Destaings, Guelriants, Lezans, Brézés, Richelieus and other magnates, and not even to them, without running over all Paris to ascertain in every possible way that their security was valid.

"Then again I see him at Potsdam, where he was allowed two wax lights, and two pounds of sugar a-day, with tea, coffee, and chocolate in proportion, all of which he sold; and then nobly kept running in and out of the King's apartments of a night, under the pretext of wanting this, that, and the other, and always carrying off a wax-light, if not two, which were

never sent back, but went to swell the packets for sales! And still more plainly do I see him borrowing the poor banker's clerk's coat of sables, to save his own purse the outlay for a fortnight's court-mourning, and it being 'a world too wide' for his poor shrunken, wisen figure—having it taken in, and sent back to the poor clerk at the end of the term, who had every reason to mourn, his coat being so small, that he could not again put it on; and it is by the light of these stolen candles (for which a poor lackey would have been discharged) and the contracted measure of that borrowed coat that I judge him,—despite all your printed greatness, and the world-wide echoes of your name, Marie, François, Arouet de Voltaire. Even Luther whom it pleases a certain portion of posterity to call 'The father of the Reformation!' Harry the Eighth of course being the *husband of it*: even Luther, I say, by the showing of his own letters, I cannot think a good man; and yet they are the only fair standards to judge him by, being the only sure footing for one's opinion between the two headlong currents of undue censure, and undue praise, which have floated his name, like a hostile fleet, down to the defenceless shores of posterity. I send you as a recompense for this long letter, and the melancholy tidings it contains, 'The Tales of my Landlord,' not by Pinchbeck, however, lest in his strange notions of the 'Distribution of Wealth' he should, in their stead, present you with that immortal quarto, flanked by his recent

duodecimo, of 'The Glories of the Gullgoose River,' but by Lord C——, who goes in a day or two, and who kindly promised to take them for me, before we left Dublin. I should not be surprised if he took them to you himself. I made him laugh so much about La Donna—not Di Garbo, but De *Gaby*, (Anglice Miss James)—and Glauber Rodolphus: there's a name to shed one's blood for! as he made you do, poor child, in your last fever!

"I know I need not tell you to let me know instantly if papa should write to you: he may do so, for you were ever his favourite, Mirry—naturally enough, for you always had the courage to write to him from yourself, and not according to my aunt's geometrical dictation; whereas I, with my usual culpable cowardice, which that superannuated noodle, the World, is pleased to denominate 'gentleness and docility'—I never dared to venture an inch beyond the standing orders of the reigning powers; but I mean to reform—Heaven only grant, that like most reformations, it may not arrive too late! but Eugène has convinced me, that there can be no good in persons of weak character, for they never have the courage to say or do what is right, however they may feel the inclination; and there is a marked line of duty for every one—which, however, like all other rules, has its exceptions: for instance, it is the duty of every child to obey its parents; but certainly not if those parents command them to do anything contrary to the laws of God.

And that mother would not only be a bad woman indeed, but a vile, bad parent, who could set her child against its father, however wicked that father might be; and though the law makes a father's authority omnipotent, yet the man who could be so heartlessly villanous as to set a child against its mother would not deserve, and ought not to have, the obedience of his children upon that point, because such cruelty is contrary to the law of nature and of God. How much more culpable then in me to have allowed myself to be influenced into being unnatural and undutiful by mere aunts, to whom even that monstrous fallacy and great social deformity, the law, as it now exists, does not delegate any warping authority!

"But as gymnastics strengthen and develop the body, so being much with great minds, and true and straightforward natures, expand and fortify the character. Don't despair of me, then, Mirry, for I cannot be in a better school than M. de Maillepré's; for besides his high and bright intelligence, which will be to me as a pharos in all future storms and straits, at once serving to cheer me on my way, and to warn me off those treacherous sunken rocks which beset the perilous sea of life, all his affections and affinities seem to be in their right compartments; and he appears to have been taught at a first-rate *manège,* to master, if I may so express myself, 'the great horse' of the passions. This he attributes to the vigilance and untiring love of an excellent mother, and the humanizing

and fructifying powers of home, and domestic influences; for, as he truly says, the whole system of English education, especially for men, is at once petrifying and corrosive—our public schools and colleges being a sort of moral Styx, into which their *alma mater* plunges them, and from which they issue impervious to the ordinary feelings of nature; and only vulnerable in one place, namely, their selfishness, which may be truly considered the heel of human nature, inasmuch as that it is certainly its lowest point. My love to Nell; and now, at last,

"God bless you, dearest Mirry. How I long to see you again, and to give you some better proof that I am, and ever shall be,

"Your affectionate sister,

"GRACE SEDLEY.

"P.S. I open my packet to say, that poor old Angus Troil, asked me if he might *make bould* when I wrote, to send Miss Mirry, de little fairy, (for with poor Angus you are still seven years old) his blessing. 'Certainly,' said I, and why not? a poor man's blessing is a great boon; as many a Dives may find out when it is too late."

When Jemima appeared to tell me that the first dinner-bell had rung, I was still crying over Grace's letter: crying at my poor father's disappearance, which was enough to make me cry, and also her description

of the crumbling desolation of Castle Sedley, which certainly was not calculated to dry my tears; crying too, at what I ought to have rejoiced; namely, the prospect of her marriage with so amiable and distinguished a person as Monsieur de Maillepré; but *self, and fear,* which is the quintessential sublimate of self, ye are monstrous strong, and form, alas! the substratum, more or less, of all poor human clay; and I only heard through the long vista of future years, my Aunt Marley's *veto,* forbidding me to go and live with Grace, and the uttermost stretch of my imagination (tolerably fertile on most other points,) could not soar so far as into that seventh heaven, when I could by any possibility be emancipated from her control. Jemima, after making the announcement about the dinner-bell, had departed. I turned round mechanically to appeal to somebody for advice, or it might be, for sympathy! there was no one. I was alone with my sorrow, and had to turn back with it into my own heart. The vulture of Prometheus is no fable!

CHAPTER III.

Being rather late, Jemima, who had conceived a wondrous affection for me latterly, was good-naturedly on the look-out to fasten my dress; which operation reminded me of Mr. Perkins's *fête* on the following day; and in order to do it all due honour, I bethought me of making a suitable appearance on so great an occasion, as far as my very limited wardrobe would allow.

"Would you have the goodness, Jemima," said I, as soon as the latter had announced that I was "done," "to tack the Mechlin lace, which you will find in my top-drawer, round the body and sleeves of my Indian muslin frock, as we dine at Mr. Perkins's to-morrow."

"I shall be very appy, Miss, to tack the lace hon; or do hany think helse for you," replied that nymph, with a toss of her head; and then added, snapping her

fingers at the conclusion of her speech, by way of *vignette*, "but has for your dining with Mr. Perkins to-morrow, hor hany hother day, not you—no more nor hi shall dine with the Prince Regent, no not more than that;" and then followed snap the second.

"But, Jemima, I assure you, he invited both Miss Dickens and myself, (with Miss James, of course), to dine with him to-morrow."

"Oh! ha! hinwited; that's a wery different thing. I don't say to the contrairy; hinwites don't cost him nothink, *they don't*,—cheap as jallop to him; but the *going* is a very different thing, Miss, you see if it ain't?"

"Well, but I really don't see how, having asked us, he can put us off."

"Hof course you can't, Miss; no one can see a thing to be downright certain of it like, till such times as it is did; but heither the chimbly 'ill take fire; the roof of the ouse blow hoff; the cook be took't hill sudden; a hearthquake be hordered special, hor some hother equally permiscus and hunexpected ewent will appear. Mark my words! there'll be a somethink, and you see if Seidlitz Lodge don't hefferwess afore five o'clock to-morrow, or my name's not Jemima Gannet. Laws a me! hif there ain't the last bell, well you hare ready, Miss; and don't you, hon account of Perkins's blow out to-morrow, stint yourself at dinner to-day, Miss; that's hall."

"I assure you, Jemima," said I, laughing, as I pre-

ceded her down stairs, "I never do stint myself; why should I take that trouble when there are four governesses to do it for me?"

"Ah! very true, miss, and more shame for 'em, I should like to know what's the use of they, and Miss James a-going as reglar as day and night to church, and hearing about feeding the ungry, when they never comes home, and does it."

It has been said that "the woman who deliberates is lost;" if so, I can only hope that deliberation does not produce the same fatal result to girls, or Heaven have mercy on "the young ladies" at "Concave House," that same twenty-eighth of September, the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen; for their deliberation was not only long, but strong, as they found themselves wedged between one of those sort of dilemmas *à deux temps*, which may be called the twin-temptation dilemma; for it so fell out, that the day was gusty, cold, and cheerless in the extreme, and that the dinner was unusually luxurious, the first course consisting of pea-soup, and a large dish opposite Madame Beccaccia, and Miss Flippens, of culinary cannon-balls, which were very appropriately called hard dumplings. Now the "young ladies" having been asked which they would take—soup, or dumpling—it was that niggardly little monosyllable, "which," that caused them all to be attacked by such a painful paroxysm of deliberation; they being unanimously of the Scotch Rector's opinion, touching the

two livings offered for his selection, "that baith war best." The attraction of the cannon-balls was, that they (naturally) would do for one's hunger the soonest; but the warm and savoury steams of the soup, on the other hand, was sending up its Circean odours irresistible in their glowing promises to the shivering plum-coloured noses, and cherry-fingers of the eager aspirants for food, gathered round that (in) hospitable board. "We should cultivate the beautiful, for the useful will cultivate itself," said Göthe; and "the young ladies" *sans s'en douter*, being of the same opinion, and the pea-soup on this occasion (only) being evidently the beautiful, its acquaintance was so cultivated, that in an incredibly short space of time, there was none left to cultivate. Whereupon, Mademoiselle de Montmorency knocking on the table for silence, hoisted a sort of verbal flag, intimating that Miss James expected every young lady to do her—duty by the dumplings.

And the soupites were the very first to respond to the appeal; but they were indignantly repulsed by being reminded, that they had bartered their hunger for "a mess of porridge." Most cannon-balls give no quarter; not so, at "Concave House," which, to the infinite disappointment of the incipients, were like the potatoes dissected into four; but as Miss Hunter wittily observed, as she turned over the adamantine segment on her plate, with that originality of humour for which the reader may have remarked the young ladies at "Concave House" were peculiarly distinguished, "It

would be harder, if there was none." I glanced towards Miss Sharpe's usual seat near me, at the head of the table, to discover by her countenance whether she had found my letter; but I then perceived, for the first time, that she had changed her seat to the other end of the table, far beyond my reach; was she afraid that at "feeding time" my vicinity would be dangerous, and that I should, for the poor ten-pound note's sake, enter into Shylockean indentures for a pound of flesh, which, indeed, it would have been difficult to have found upon her, as she was as thin as a north-wind, and looked her name well? I must say, that I dislike those sort of ultra thin people, who seem to have spoiled the Egyptians by finding out the secret of making living mummies of themselves: for all these *Cassiusalculi* with a "lean and hungry look," are more or less dangerous. Human virtues belong to flesh and blood; therefore skin and bone seldom, if ever, possess them, but are as parsimonious in their feelings, as nature has been in their miserable and miserly persons. All good feelings are broad and deep, and therefore these psychological elephants cannot possibly have room to exist within the Lilliputian precincts of an ambulating mummy; to be slight—ay, even as a willow-bough is a beauty; but to be thin, why the very echo of the word is sin!

For half a second, I succeeded in catching poor Miss Sharpe's eye, but in less than the other half, it was averted; and she sat, if possible, more on the edge of

her chair than usual, and fidgetted "tremenjus," as Jemima would have expressed it. I then turned away, resolved not to annoy her by any more looks. After dinner, the weather was pronounced too bad for us to go out, so that we were, *nolens volens*, confined to the school-room; but having no ochre to pick, the more juvenile delinquents employed themselves in tearing their books, which served no other purpose than that of inflating their parents' bills. As it never retarded a lesson, or commuted an imposition a single minute, Miss James had always relays of grammars, dictionaries, and abridgments of history, ready to expedite her pupils' voyage of discovery, though I must say, they made the journey something after the fashion of an old Prussian friend of mine, Princess N——, whom I once met on the top of the Simplon; not, indeed, like Lord Byron's English Tourists—I beg pardon, I mean "British Females," at Chamounix, saying "how rural!" but enjoying the view in a *dormeuse* with a pillow stuffed into each window.

The elder girls paired off; ours not being a long parliament, but on the contrary *very short commons*, indeed, left us plenty of time, like our prototypes of the legislature, for doing—nothing! This (which was, perhaps, still more like them), being what we did best, having a decided vocation for it. There was great whispering and exchanging of thimbles and tambour needles that day between Miss Dickens and Miss Sherwood, and mysterious makings up of little silver

paper packages, and settlings of work-boxes, with presentation copies of needle books, reversions of emery pin-cushions, and endowments of floss silk, which might have convinced, even those the least conversant with great events, or political and planetary revolutions, that there was going to be a "something" (again to borrow from Jemima's terse yet comprehensive vocabulary.)

I was very miserable, and *désœuvrée*, having no confidants or worldly affairs to settle, and worse still, no new books to read,—"The Tales of My Landlord" not having yet arrived; and poor Miss Austen having thought fit to accompany Madame de Staël, and the deeply and deservedly lamented Princess Charlotte the preceding year on the long journey! Miss Edgeworth was dilatory, and had done nothing lately; and we were not allowed *Porter* in any shape. At Concave House, Miss Ferrier's admirable novels were not then written; and even in those days, the *Invitâ Minervâ* of the Minerva press was too much for me; for as yet, none of the Tritons of these literary minnows had in their deliriums, commonly called fictions, begun to suffer from undigested lumps of Göthe, or a determination of Schiller to the head, which the "British Public" have deemed, though second hand, quite as good as new in these latter days (saints that they are,) ay, and the British reviewers, too, for that matter; but then, one must recollect that gentlemen of the press cannot undertake to be responsible for the senti-

ments of either the puffs or the peltings done to order in their respective* papers and periodicals; and the few noble exceptions, which prove the rule, though well worth remembering (and gratefully too), are not worth mentioning; but at that time I was in happy ignorance of the atrocities of authorship, the perils of printing, and the rampant rabidity of reviewers, so e'en let me quit the *convex*, and return to the Concave. Seeing me walking up and down the school-room like a troubled spirit, as I really was, gossip delighting me not, nor games either, Miss Flippens accosted me with the following interesting suggestion.

"Miss Sedley, don't you think it would be better if you sat down and took your 'sewing!'" which latter peculiarly vulgar term for needle-work, by the bye, is another of the innumerable elegancies and accuracies of diction, which has crept into modern literature with great success. The reason that calling needlework indiscriminately "sewing" is obviously vulgar, because it is inapplicable to it; for the work in question may chance to be hemming, felling, stitching, whipping, overcasting, or darning, and consequently not "sewing" at all. For the same reason, as well might kissing and joining hands be called, "at one fell swoop," marriage! for though it is true that people do kiss (just at the beginning) in marriage, and join hands (the latter alas!) for ever and a

* To printer's devil. Now don't go and misprint this into *respectable*, there's a dear, good, worthy gentleman: for you, who no doubt, are the very *type* of respectability, must surely know better.

day, yet neither of these proceedings, separately, nor both of them combined, constitute that awful ceremony called "Marriage!" either according to the rites of the church, or to the wrongs of the institution. So after reading this invaluable work, I hope I shall never again have the misfortune to hear anything in the shape of a gentlewoman call her work, her "sewing!" unless, indeed, she means to proceed the whole animal; and also call kissing her young lady-friends (a most ridiculous and unpleasant custom, peculiarly rife amongst "British females"), and shaking hands with their brothers, marriage! which would be as absurd as comparing the bite of a gnat to the sting of a serpent, or the amiable little *piquante* attentions of a whole nest of hornets, to the homœopathically ticklish predicament of an innocent fly, taking a constitutional walk over one's equally innocent nose. However, both as regards hornets, and another equally venomous animal, rejoicing in the same initial, there can be no doubt that

"Honesta quardam scelera successus facit."

I thanked Miss Flippens, but declined availing myself of her obliging hint, as I was at that time reaping some of the bitter fruits which others had sown for me. It seems a cruel thing that, as we should all of us, from the wisest down to the silliest, do both ourselves and others quite harm enough in this world, if left to our own devices, friends and relations must be always

getting our poor piece of network, called life, into such an unconscionable tangle for us, that we can neither get out of it, or go on with it, and so nine times out of ten are compelled to struggle, till we die in the toils; for there are few mice in the world, though an abundance of rats (more especially in, and about St. Stephens) which are terribly versed in multiplication, if in nothing else. At length I recollected that if I thought till doomsday, it would neither discover my father's retreat, bring my dear good uncle back, or give me any legitimate "local habitation" in this world; for, oh! how soon we learn the bitter lesson, that we can do nothing towards the amelioration of our own fate. A chain of circumstances is forged for us; with it, we are bound and fettered in the strong prison of necessity, without in the first instance having committed any fault, like the victims of the first French revolution, whose only crime was being guilty of none; and for one, that has the courage or the perseverance (not forgetting the good fortune) to escape from their bondage, millions only do so, by being led out to the stake.

But in either instance, whether our lot be evasion or execution, it teaches that one great truth, that on God alone must we depend; and that there is no appeal from man, but to Him; and then, come what may, we shall still believe that whatever is, is right, however wrong the means may appear that are employed to achieve it, for everything leads one to suppose that that strange and complicated tissue, called human destinies,

must be the tapestry of heaven, which, like every other, is always worked on the wrong side, showing us nothing but the cross-grained shreds and nottings here and *there*, which alone we shall behold as a beautiful and finished whole.

Laying down my load, then, for the present—as life is a long journey to many, and more or less a weary one to all, and we should not, therefore, be too prodigal of our sorrow, for any single misfortune, but remember that

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,"

and so remembering, I went up stairs.

Oh! the horrors of having no room that one could call one's own, or where one could be to oneself! I cannot say, that

"By the waters of Babylon I sat down and wept,"

but by those in the little *pro bono publico* dressing-room, I certainly did—and knelt down, and prayed, too. Oh! blessed boon of God to mortals! Prayer is the electric telegraph of the soul to Heaven: it asks for mercy, and the instantaneous answer from above is PEACE!

I rose up comforted, for I had cast my burden upon Him, whom I knew could bear it, or would enable me to do so; and after plunging my face into cold water, and drying my eyes, I went into the next room to

Helen and Jessy, who set up a cry of joy at my appearance, and began praising me for my goodness in coming to them; but as I knew I did not deserve their praises, having, poor little things, completely forgotten them, and only then having gone to them to escape from the galleys of the school-room—not being a great philanthropist, *alias* a benevolence-monger by trade, and, above all things, detesting fine sentiments and false pretences, I laughed as I sat down near the fire, and said, as I made free with Helen's and Jessy's ears, both of whom considered my pinches as an especial honour:

"You are pleased to take my visitation all to yourselves; but how do you know that I did not come here on account of the good fire, and wholly and solely to make myself comfortable?"

"Oh, because we know you didn't!" answered they, logically, in the same breath; and as the conclusion they had jumped to was all in my favour, I did not of course argue the point, but took up what the elegant Flippens called their *sewing*, which happened to be a doll's frock, the tucks of which they could not, as Jessy despondingly informed me, get straight; so after the most approved rule of the sages of every age, from the time when Adam was made Governor of Ceylon,* during the first Whig administration—for,

* The Jews have a tradition that, when Adam committed that very silly act of mortgaging Eden for an apple (all the blame of which he of course put upon his wife), and was expelled from Paradise, he was sent

according to Dr. Johnson, the D—l was the first Whig, but, unfortunately for us of the nineteenth

(*credat judæus*) to Ceylon; while Eve preferred the more salubrious climate of Mount Arafa, near Mecca, which, also, had the additional advantage of being one hundred and seventy-five years' journey from each other. But poor Adam, *a lonely and unprotected man!* is always much to be pitied, even under the most flagrant circumstances. Well, poor Adam, as I was going to say, or rather have already said, being much to be pitied, and also of a social and domestic turn, for he had brought away some branches of the tea-tree from Eden, and there being no clubs, but wooden ones, in those days, and no *coryphées* at all, he really was, as I have just remarked, much to be pitied, for though he had secured the tea (and turn out, too) yet where was a lonely and *unprotected male*, to get hot water wherewith to make it? Where, indeed! but from that never-failing source which, from the beginning, has supplied the whole world so abundantly with it, namely, the Personage whom one must not name to ears polite. So Adam set his wits to work, and after having composed that sublime and commercial free-trade theory, for theory is the beginning of all action, which pronounces exchange to be no robbery, he began to seek employment for his affections (as lady's footman), which had now been some time out of place; and with a nice sense of civil and religious liberty, which every one knows the Whigs are fond of *talking* about for others, and *securing* for themselves, what does he do, but help himself to the devil's spare rib, Madam Lilith—for his Satanic Majesty having taken Eve, did not, of course, want "a *Sunday's best*" in the way of wives. So Lilith and Adam established a little Agapemone of their own at Ceylon, of which the Colonial Office, however, took not the slightest notice, it being no doubt quite as ignorant of what was going on in the Colonies in those days, as it is in these. Well, for a time, nothing could mis-rule better than the petticoat government of Ceylon. Adam made love, and Lilith made tea, till her *sposo*, as usual, made mischief; for, wanting his wife back, he, in a large bolus of custom, dosed Adam with the idea that he

century, not the last!—I began, *secundum artem*, finding great fault with the running of the tucks, telling them that bad work in needles, was what bad grammar was in speaking—a great disgrace to a gentlewoman.

"Vulgar people," said I, "may work and speak badly; but no one with any pretensions to be a lady will be guilty of slovenliness in either."

I've no toleration for a woman who cannot do every sort of plain-work, both neatly and expeditiously; for there is something unfeminine in this sort of incapacity, and an unwomanly woman is always detestable. Most of us take naturally to Berlin-work and embroidery; they are a part of our organization, like hysterics and fainting-fits; but what can be a greater incarnation of

was married to Lilith, and it may easily be supposed how tired the poor man got of her then. But the most remarkable part of this history remains to be told. Adam, still labouring under this matrimonial monomania that Lilith was his wife, one day (that I suppose she had "*not made his tea to his liking*,") told her to go to the d—l; and what confirmed him in the delusion was, that she obeyed him to the letter, and went; thus Adam was once more a lonely and *unprotected sass!* In modern times, there are millions of resources for unprotected males, but, alas! in those times, Lilith and Eve were the only females extant, in, or out of, Great Britain. "Necessity," says the proverb, "is the mother of Invention," so Adam, not content with being the father of mankind, takes on himself this maternal *rôle* also, and, "getting up his steam," as the Americans, who were not then invented, now say, what does he do but fall in love with Eve over again! who, on her side, having no prior engagement, accepted his "polite invitation," and so once more they "lived and loved together!" Adam, in his old age, thus becoming what British females denominate "*quite a reformed character!*"

discomfort, and disgust, than one of your dawdling, desultory women, who neither do, nor know how to do anything about a house, but accumulate disorder and privations for themselves and every one about them; whereas, if they learned their Lares and Penates properly by heart, they would find, that however they might be treated like slaves by their owners, they still had a sceptre in their needle, and a shield in their thimble, against the invasions of *ennui*; and they would also know, that burnt-offerings, in the shape of over-roasted joints, and bad dinners, only exasperated, instead of appeasing the Eumenides.

As all this passed through my mind, so I resumed my lecture, after basting down the tucks, and beginning to run one of them.

"Oh! but I never *can* do them as neatly as that," cried Jessy.

"Try. You don't know what you can do, till you try; and there are few much more difficult things which patience and perseverance cannot accomplish."

"Will it please you very very much if I do the whole tuck up as neatly as you have begun it?"

"Very much," said I.

"Then I'll try."

Ambition is infectious, whether simply directed to constructing dolls' clothes, or surreptitiously aimed at subverting dynasties: so that, soon after, Helen was fired with the great intent of astonishing my weak mind with a *chef-d'œuvre* of a doll's bonnet, and these

two vast enterprises kept them so quiet, that I was left to the indulgence of my own thoughts, which did anything but indulge me, as they were cruel in the extreme: for memory is the harshest step-mother I know, never telling us of anything pleasant, but, at the same time, to remind us that we have lost it. For the last hour, there had been a dead silence, and I was looking as intently into the fire as if there was a certainty of my finding a solution of all my doubts and queries amidst its glowing landscapes, and grotesque figures, when the door opened, and Miss Sharpe put her head into the room, but, seeing me, she grew very red, bobbed one of her usual stiff, and yet ricketty, nervous sort of curtseys, and saying:

"Oh! I beg your pardon: I did not know you were here, Miss Sedley," withdrew, despite my "Pray come in, Miss Sharpe," so that I again relapsed into my reverie, till roused by an exclamation from Jessy, who for the last half hour had been straining her eyes at the window over the miraculous tuck:

"Oh, Miriam! do come here. I think you will say that I have done it beautifully!"

"Well," said I, laughing as I rose, and walking over to the window; "you should leave me to say that, Jess."

"Why?" asked Jessy, innocently.

"Because, don't you know," said Helen, "people always appear ridiculous when they praise themselves."

"Do they?" re-interrupted p
appealing to me.

"Yes: Helen is quite right.
do appear not only ridiculou
Suppose that even the Sun, if
suddenly to burst out into a t
'What a brilliant fellow I am!
your poor little farthing rushligh
compare to me? Not gold an
for they could not even exist wi
that poor, pale-faced old wom
maiden name was Diana), sh
clouds, and break her neck, if
every night!' Now, though al
yet don't you think we should
Sun bragging and boasting in t
think the very sky would laugh
eruption of stars on its face!"

"Ha! ha! ha! I'm sure I
Jessy, now in full giggle, danc
hands, till she forgot even the
from them, and which I took up
it, said:

"Well, this really is well don
not quite even, some being smal
see, my Jess, we are never quit
ourselves: but still, it is a great
the other work I have ever seen
u, you don't know what you

"Is it well done enough for me to have as many kisses as I like, both my ears pinched, and to choose a story?" said Jessy.

"Why, really, upon examining it again, I must say that I think it is."

The next moment, Jessy's little arms were round my neck, and I only escaped strangulation by hurrying the second act of the ear pinching, after which I turned to Helen, and asked when the bonnet was to be finished.

"Oh!" said Helen, listlessly; "I've done it, and undone it so many times, that I don't think I can do it. However, at all events, I shall leave it till to-morrow."

"It is very right to be diffident and doubtful of our success, Helen; but when doubt and diffidence are not accompanied by industry and perseverance, they degenerate into indolence, which is the rust of the mind, and unfits it for all useful purposes. Remember the French proverb I told you the other day: '*Vouloir, c'est pouvoir!*'"

"*C'est vrai!*" cried Helen, executing a sort of *bravoura* of kisses on my eyelids and forehead, as she nearly pushed Jessy off my lap to make way for herself, "*car je veux t'aimer, et je t'aime.* And now for a story, and I will finish the bonnet to-morrow."

"Well, what story is it to be?"

"Oh! that nice German story about Master Cherrystalk's Cat."

"What! the old Schrausenhaussen story?"

"Yes," said Helen, laughing, "the old Crackenjaw-senstory."

"But Jess was to choose. Do you also choose Master Cherrystalk's Cat, Jess?"

Jessy having mewed assent, I began, and ended, the life and adventures of that wonderful animal with great applause, both my auditors deciding, *nem con.*, that, Pur-the-moon, Master Cherrystalk's cat, was a much more profound and original thinker (of course he was when he swallowed mathematics instead of mice, and lapped metaphysics instead of milk), and altogether a greater genius than his English, or, rather, French rival, "Puss in Boots;" but I would not, nor will not, give up my old friend, the "Marquis de Carrabas's faithful Squire" for all the German grimalkins that never smelt a rat, but will maintain, against a world in arms—or in boots either—that the *Chat Botté* was at once the finest feline gentleman, and the cleverest diplomatist that ever existed; for though, no doubt (*sans compter ceux de nos Châteaux en Espagne*) we have many quite as treacherous, yet are they not within ten thousand skins as clever.

After prayers that night, when every head had been curled and capped, and Madame Beccaccia had supervised the perpendicular position of the bottle of dentifrice, in the second drawer, left-hand corner, and she and the rest of her coadjutrices were filing off, the thought struck me, that it was just possible, by some unforeseen *contretemps*, that Miss Sharpe might not

have got my letter; and if so, the poor woman would think that I was not only unkind, but ill-bred, in not having answered hers. I was puzzled how to act; for if I asked her, as she had said nothing about it, it would look as if I thought about what I had done, and wanted to remind her of it. The bare idea was worse than perplexing—it was detestable: but then, on the other hand, if she had not found it, and it had gone astray, how should I be able to remedy the evil, and to exculpate myself in her opinion, if I did not ascertain the real state of the case?

Poor, dear Mademoiselle de Guilleragues!—here another of her golden rules came to my aid—which was, never through life to let a false delicacy, or spurious generosity, risk the smallest particle of the well-being of another, that we might stand a step or two higher on our own dignity; but always strictly and unshrinkingly weigh and judge our own heart, as God judged all hearts by its unvarnished and unveiled intentions; and when our consciences had so judged it, never to let our courage shrink from carrying out its sentence.

Mine having therefore now decided, that whether Miss Sharpe would think me mean or not, I ought on her account to find out whether she had received what I intended she should receive. Having come to this decision, I followed her as she was disappearing through the dressing-room; and as soon as I had closed the door, perceiving that we were alone, I said,

as hurriedly as I could, in passing on to the washing-slab, so as not to make an *affaire d'état* of it:

"Miss Sharpe, I hope you found the letter I left for you this morning under the stocks?"

"Oh, yes, thank you; but, indeed, I'd rather repay it as I said, and save you the forfeit-money; and then, you know, it would be a mutual accommodation, Miss Sedley. Though now obliged to be a teacher in a school, you have no idea how proud my dear father, who belongs to one of the very first families in Margate, always brought us up to be. Indeed, my mother's relations, too, are almost all *carriage people*—quite so, I may say; for old Mrs. Wigget, for many years, was the only shay visitor we had."

Miss Sharpe delivered this eloquent piece of declamation amid a series of little fidgets, first standing on one leg, and then on the other, like a sick canary, amid much hesitation and colouring, carefully avoiding to look towards me the while. Had every word she uttered been an ipecacuanah lozenge, it could not have made me feel more nauseously uncomfortable; and I was truly grateful when Jemima appeared, at the penultimate sentence of her harangue, to say that Miss James wanted her immediately, in the drawing-room.

I came to the conclusion that night—and it has never yet been refuted, though often since confirmed—that nothing can be more painfully mean than the way which a certain class of English have of asking,

unless it be their manner of receiving; but, poor creatures, one must make allowances for them; for bad manners are the national epidemic, and *no mistake;* however, in the course of my life, I have met with three or four English persons, who not only did noble things, but did things nobly; reminding one of the right royal largesses, the *Noël* of "Chivalry's Pilgrim Kings." And this is well for the solemn pageant of some great necessity; but on the poor, and much-reviled continent, verily! one meets a Good Samaritan at every road-side, by which poor human nature faints; and when it falls among thieves, that best of oil and wine—sympathy and help!

A very charming lady of my acquaintance, who passes her life between the study of Christianity, and the acting the great part of a Christian, and whose charities are as universal as charity should be, was very angry with me for my solar-microscope view of the English character, wherever money is concerned, when, lo! one day she came to me as much excited as so well-regulated a person could be. She had applied to some rich lady, in one of her *sœur de charité* rounds, for some great and urgent case of distress.

"And would you believe it?" said she, "her answer was, *'Oh, no, I never give to those sort of things, for I'm sure the people who collect, make a profit on the money for themselves!'*"

And this was said by one (*soi-disant*) gentlewoman! to another.

"Oh! yes," said I, "I'd believe anything of English coarseness, and ill-breeding, and more where money is concerned, and so will you too, when you have looked a little oftener through my solar microscope, and seen how, in English society, the poor little monstrous animalculæ are all preying upon and tearing each other to pieces; for to take shelter under the umbrella of 'the Times' against the pitiless storm that awaits me, for daring to tell the truth upon the sealed subject of our national vices. We pride ourselves* on the solid *bonâ fide* character of our civilization; if we do not strike so high as some countries, we do not fall so low as others; and we are, at all events, what we profess to be: perhaps rather better. This comfortable conviction, however, is fated to receive an occasional shock;" and it most undoubtedly would be better, if we could—

"Perish in this shock,
Than linger peace-meal on the rock!"

of flinty, sordid selfishness, upon which it so often throws us.

"Here's your frock, Miss," said Jemima.

As I scrubbed away most unmercifully at my teeth, as if to get the taste of Miss Sharpe out of my mouth, or, it might be, the dust from the wheels of Mrs.

* See leading article of "The Times," of Saturday, November 30th, 1850.

Wigget's "shay!" and those of all the other "*carriage people!*"

"There's your dress, Miss, but my b'leefe his, that there won't be no dressing wanted to-morrow, hexcept the dressing of the six o'clock dinner at Concave Ouse."

"So you still think we shall not dine with Mr. Perkins, Jemima?"

"Dine with him! oh, lor, ah! no fear of your not dining with him, and it is a sight: oh, Gemini!"

"What he eats for two, that is with a twin appetite, I suppose?" laughed I.

"For two, Miss! bless you! nearerer for twenty! but it's the nasty mess as he makes of it: quite a hoperation! for all the world as hif he was making hup one of his hown prescriptions; first he shovels hon the salt as hif it was salts, Miss, by the hounce—actelly by the hounce; then he has at the cayenne pepper has hif he was a making hup them ere cayenne pepper pills, has Miss Homeny takes, and which I always ave, and always shall, consider them it his has makes her wig so dry and hobstinate-like, and her nose like a capsicum; and then when he've got this here Tower of Babel on his plate, to see the way the wittles disappear! hit's hawful, Miss! quite hawful! one would think he must be heither a hog, or a conjurer, for that no mere Christian could make mountains vanish has he does."

"Well, I am baby enough to be very fond of good

conjuring, and shall look forward to Mr. Perkins's performance to-morrow at Seidlitz Lodge."

"Seidlitz Lodge, Miss! not a bit of hit, that's the wery first think as he'll conjure away: you see if he don't."

"Why, I thought you said just now, that I should be sure to dine with Mr. Perkins to-morrow!"

"Oh, yes! *with* him, Miss, fast enough, but quite hon another line; the Seidlitz Lodge coach never takes no hinsides, hit don't; besides, hI know very well what I see and heeared this arternoon, and it's heasy to know what *that* foretells, without consulting hon a gipsy."

"You speak nothing but riddles, Jemima: what do you mean?"

"I mean, Miss, that this blessed arternoon, no later than four o'clock, Tibbs, who was digging a bed of Jerusalem poneys—hartichokes, I should say—was called away from his work to speak to Miss Homeny hin the all; so has I suspected there was a somethink, thinks hI, h'Ill listen, and ear what you've a been called hin so particlar hand special for; so presently hI ears Miss Homeny a hemming, hand a grunting, hand a clearing her throat, has hif she ad a chaldron of Perkins's cayenne pills a blocking hup the way, and has soon has she'd shovelled some on 'em down, she says, Tibbs, says she, you must leave your work hand go directly to town, to Fortnum hand Mason's, for a bottle hof the best this year's gherkins: here's the

money, hand mind has you brings 'em back yourself, has they're wanted for dinner to-morrow, hand call hat Clarke's, hat the same time, hand tell him to give you two of his best geese, hand to be sure that they hare the best, for they hare for a person that his and ought to be a judge, but, above all, don't forget the gherkins. Now, Miss, hI say, has Madame Beckhatchyou says to the young ladies, hI should just like to ave a free translation of that ere, and know, in plain English, the meaning of them there gherkins?"

"Perkins! Jemima, it is but too plain that no goose, not even the owner, will grace the festive halls of Seidlitz Lodge to-morrow!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning a bulletin was issued, stating that Miss Dickens was too unwell to get up, though, she added, it was nothing but a cold. Mr. Perkins was to call for us in state at two o'clock to go to the Bible Meeting; but Miss James, always happy to open a channel of communication between Concave House and Seidlitz Lodge, despatched that never-let-to-rest locomotive Tibbs, to Turnham Green, with a message—or it might be a note—apprizing him of Miss Dickens's indisposition, which would also prevent her having the pleasure of dining at Seidlitz Lodge that day; whereupon Glauber Rodolphus forwarded, by the return Tibbs, his representative in the shape of a nauseous dose, and also the following note, which Miss James (with the powder) read out for Miss Dickens' and my edification,

just as Jemima was putting the finishing stroke to my toilette:

"Dear and most honoured Madam,—

"I regret to hear of your amiable young friend Miss Dickens's illness, but hope to see her professionally a little before two. I also most deeply regret having to announce to you a sad and most unexpected misfortune——

"'I knowed it,' *sotto voced* Jemima at this paragraph of the note, and at the same time, by way of note of interrogation, squeezing my dress terribly tight in the waist.

"But," continued Miss James, "about an hour ago the north-east wall of my dining-room fell in—or rather, I should say, fell out—crushing, I am sorry to add, in its fall a favourite China pig. I won't say how I had reckoned upon the bacon of that pig, for a certain fair friend of mine—but man proposes" (not always, seemed to think poor Miss James, as she sighed deeply in reading this affecting sentence) "and God disposes. And as Shakspeare (or Mr. Shandy, I forget which, but one of these great poets) says, 'We are here to-day, and gone to-morrow'—a great truth, that I see daily illustrated among my patients. You perhaps will be in some sort prepared for this accident, as it was only yesterday that we were talking of settlements, and saying what slippery things they were, either in walls or on widows. But to the young ladies, who was to

have honoured me with their companies, I trust you will express my apologies and regrets—unless, indeed, you, and they, will honour me with your companies at dinner, at the 'Star and Garter,' at Richmond, or 'The Toy,' at Hampton Court, if you don't think it too late to go to either of these places, after we have been to the meeting; at all events, I shall have the pleasure of being at your door, at two precisely, in a glass coach, which I have hired expressly for the auspicious occasion; and meanwhile remain, most honoured madam, with my respects to Miss Omeny, and the young ladies that was to have honoured me with their companies at dinner to-day,

"Your faithful and obedient servant,

"GLAUBER RODOLPHUS PERKINS.

"Seidlitz Lodge,
("At least what's left of it,)
"Turnham Green, September 29th, 1818."

"And how beautifully he bears it!" exclaimed Miss James, casting up her eyes, as she refolded Mr. Perkins's epistle.

"Ah! some people can bear *nothink!*" muttered Jemima, still busy about my dress.

"It would be *indeckerous*" (indecorous), resumed Miss James, "for unmarried females to go and dine at an hotel with what may be called a bachelor, though fenced and fettered by an unfortunate matrimonial alliance. In the *boosom* of his do-mestic privacy, it was

a very different thing; the world would then not have known it, and consequently could not have talked; don't you agree with me, my dear Miss Dickens?"

But poor Miss Dickens appeared to be suffering so much, that whether it was assent or dissent that issued from the bed, it was impossible to determine, as Miss Dickens's feeble voice was inaudible in the — blankets.

"No, Mr. Perkins must give us the pleasure of his company here; and I invite you also, Miss Sedley," said Miss James, as she sailed out of the room.

She could scarcely have got down stairs, before Miss Dickens, starting up in her bed, and pushing the curtain aside, put out a peculiarly merry-looking rosy face, which did not seem to be the most distantly related to the poor feeble voice we had just heard; and bursting into a loud laugh, said:

"Well, what do you think of Glauber Rodolphus's put off?"

"Why, that if the story's true, that he's not so fortunate in his mortar as in his pestle, as some one said of another apothecary, who ruined himself with building. But I am glad to see that you are not really ill: but why do you pretend to be so?"

"Oh! nothing, only I did not at all fancy the bore of dining at Seidlitz Lodge; but now don't go and betray me into the hands of the Philistines, Miriam."

"I don't think," I replied, trying to be as mild as Miss Flippens herself, "that I am in the habit of

telling tales; I don't even tell stories, except to amuse Helen and Jessy, since they have been ill."

"No, I must do you the justice to say that you never do tell either tales or stories; and do you know, you're just the sort of girl I *could have liked* desperately, Miriam; you are in some things such a capital fellow, as a friend of mine would say; but then again, in others you are so high, and so grand, that somehow or other, even when I was running full speed to like you the most, I was always pushed back by being afraid of you."

"I'm sorry for that, for I don't mean to be either high or grand, as you call it, for I'm sure I have no reason to be so, indeed I don't know who has, but it's not that: I'll tell you what it is, for I feel it myself, and it makes me miserable. I have always had grown-up people for my companions, and very superior people, too; and I think it has made me too old for my age; and yet, that can scarcely be, for I delight in children, and always feel at home with them: but people like Miss James and Miss Omeny, and the four teachers, they fret and ruffle my very soul, I have not the temper to support their stupidity, or the toleration to palliate their ignorance, to say nothing of their vulgarity; and yet," added I, looking round the room, and perceiving that she was gone—"Jemima *fait mes délices*, but I suppose it is because she is what she is, and they are always trying to be what they are not, and never will be,—fine ladies!"

"Well, perhaps it is that," responded Miss Dickens, in a dubious voice, "but then, you read all sorts of stupid books, and besides you know Latin."

"Come! that is a far-fetched accusation, for if I do, I never speak it, and therefore it is a doubly dead language with me; so be just, Mary Anne, for if you had not wondered over that prescription of Dr. Bailey's once, when I had that brain-fever, or rather, when I was recovering from it, you would never have known that I was guilty of that crime; since it seems it *is* a crime to know anything, everyone else don't know."

"Well, yes, certainly, I must do you justice, too, about that, you never do bother one with your learning and all that sort of humbug; and you are very good-natured in doing our French and Italian exercises for us, and thereby helping us to *do* old Beccaccia and the mock Montmorency; but still, still and for all that, you are not one of us."

"Not one of you? Am I not then one of the 'Thirty-nine Articles' forming the Concave House 'Establishment?' for with the four incapables, we make *just* thirty-nine, though not perhaps thirty-nine *just!*"

"What I mean is, that you are always Miriam Sedley, by yourself Miriam, and you never talk about lovers and admirers, and all that sort of thing, as we do."

"And for a very good reason," said I, laughing, "because I have none to talk about."

"Oh! that is your own fault, I'm very sure that

had you given that handsome Captain Pierrepoint only half the encouragement I gave my Algernon, he would have been at your feet long ago, for he never takes his eyes off of you, and has actually changed his place in the gallery with Major Drinkhard, to have a better view of you."

"Encouragement! have a man at my feet, whose name I never heard till now!" repeated I, unaffectedly horrified, "surely you are jesting?"

"Well, you'll find it no joke to be an old maid, which I think is what is very likely to happen, if you go on as you are doing."

"No joke, certainly," said I; "for it seems to me about the most sensible thing a woman can do, is to be an old maid; for Helen Penrose says her mother is always crying, and a lady I know, that is, by name only; but every one says that she had such a dreadful husband: that he was a perfect monster of meanness, and cruelty; and that when husbands choose to be such, there is no law to restrain them, but many to help and encourage them in their wickedness; and such being the case, I think women are desperate fools to marry. Look too, how shamefully that Lord Mountflummery behaved to poor Miss Sharpe's sister."

"Oh, stuff!" responded Miss Dickens, with a toss of her head, like a genuine "British female," as she was; "I always take the men's part. A woman's a fool that can't manage her own husband.

"Dear me!" said I, "what a sweeping charge of

folly you are bringing against nearly the whole sex, which, after all, is only another version of what I said, namely, that women were great fools to marry. I have no doubt there are exceptions, and that the poor Princess Charlotte, for instance, found a husband the most docile, irreproachable, and obedient of created beings, and that all heiresses apparent to thrones will do the same; but to those who have no crowns, and only aspire to being "a crown to their husband," I repeat that they run a fearful risk, as long as the laws are as they are, and that there is not one to protect them against the most fiend-like persecution, as long as it is conceived in unimaginable meanness, and executed with the most unscrupulous villany."

"Oh! a fiddlestick for laws! fast bind—fast find; and if my husband was to play *me* false, I'd soon find it out; and would not I lead him a life? He should have enough of it, I promise him," cried Miss Dickens, thumping the immaculate pillow, as vindictively as if it had been Fitz Pipeclay himself, a Benedict of ten years standing, discovered in a *case* with the housemaid.

"Well, I cannot say," said I, "that I have any fancy either for leading people lives, or for being led one; and as for being jealous of my husband, or finding him out, as you call it, I should either despise him too thoroughly, or compassionate him and myself too deeply, to feel what is termed jealousy."

"I confess I don't understand you, Miriam; I'm dull, like the honest Satyr in the fable, and surprised

at seeing you blow hot and cold; for first you cool your jealousy with contempt, and then you warm it with compassion! What do you mean?"

"I mean," said I, "that if I had the misfortune to be married to so contemptible a wretch, that he could, out of mere cold-blooded vanity, or vulgar gallantry, endanger another woman's reputation and my happiness, I should despise him too thoroughly ever to waste a single feeling on him but that of contempt; but if he was so ill-fated as to really love another woman, and no longer love me, I think I should pity him and myself so profoundly, that like an overcharged galvanic battery, my heart would burst, and there would be an end of it."

"Pity *him*! *your* heart break! More fool you then for your pains. I'd tear his eyes out, if that's the sort of use he made of them;" and "Poor Mary Anne" sank back upon her pillow, as if she had actually, and not merely theoretically, performed this somewhat fatiguing act of gouging.

"What! Algernon's eyes?" asked I, laughing.

"Ay, any eyes, and all the eyes in the world, if they played me false, even though they had all hooks to them, and were to fasten into mine, and tear them from my sockets while I was about it."

As she delivered this little lecture upon moral philosophy, there was about Miss Dickens's whole deportment, inflection of voice, and kindling of eye, and cheek, something so Sidonic, not to say Sardonic, and

quintessentially Lady Macbethish, that, altogether, I did not envy Lieutenant FitzPipeclay, though there was something not only more Christian, but exceedingly pretty in his baptismal name. Still, I fear, he must have found all his *Inamoratas poulets à la tartare;* neither could I help reflecting, that here was another proof that clipping, mowing, rolling, and suppressing every *good* and expansive feeling, every warm and generous impulse, does not, in the least, interfere with the most luxuriant and ferine growth of poisonous weeds, and stubborn branches of gnarled upas. Oh, life! thou art indeed a strange mystery of palsied right and gratuitous wrong; is it because, as Plato says, that the body is the grave of the soul? if so, it is with it, as with all other tombs, unchecked and deserted nature furnishes the weeds and the corruption; affection and pious attention alone strew the flowers, and grave and honourable epitaph. It was one of those unities which chance so often preserves in the drama of existence, that just as I was pondering upon graves, and their inmates, and the charnel affinities of matter and spirit, Mr. Perkins should be announced, *he,* the high priest! of, and great purveyor to the latter.

"Your most obedient, Miss Sedley," said he, advancing with his best Bible Meeting bow, at once pious and polite, "heered of my unfortunate haccident, hi suppose; should ave been too appy hotherwise to ave ad the honour, though should still ave been deprived of the

pleasure of your company, my dear Miss Dickens. How did we get hill? hey, nothink serious, I ope," added he, tenderly feeling that young lady's pulse, which, luckily for her *rôle de malade*, was thumping at fever speed, after the gymnastics of her theoretical gouging.

"Humph," said Mr. Perkins, "perfect quiet, and saline draughts."

"Not Seidlitz though," murmured the "*malade imaginaire*" in satirical allusion to Glauber Rodolphus's frustrated hospitality.

"Ahem! no; nothink more than a little lemon-juice, and carbonate of soda; rather of an *hexciteable tempratoore*, hi should say, like our friend, Miss Sedley, here."

"Please, Sir," said Jemima, flinging into the room, "the coachman wants to know if so be as you mean to keep the osses a-standing long here? cause hif so, he'd bait e'm afore they go back to Hammersmith."

"Hon no account," cried Mr. Perkins, springing to his feet!" we shall not get good places, if we do not proceed immediately. Good morning, Miss Dickens; hi shall look hin again in the hevening."

And so saying, Mr. Perkins proceeded to the door, leaving me to follow at a respectful distance, as "British females" are always expected to do, wherever the superior male animalculæ of the creation are concerned. So be it, as long as, thank Heaven, we are not obliged to follow in their steps. Miss Dickens

flung off her night-cap, ran her fingers through her hair, so as to give it the spiral form of Mr. Perkins's toupée, and kneeling upon her bed, began imitating his dignified deportment till he had quitted the room, while Jemima crammed her apron into her mouth not to laugh, and I followed him down stairs. Miss James and Miss Omeny, being in waiting in the hall, were duly handed into the "glass-coach," which, by-the-bye, from its capacious dimensions, I should suspect had once been a mourning-coach; for, although it had thrown off its weeds, it was now labouring under an incipient yellow fever, there being an evident struggle going on, on the part of the original black to pierce through the coat of jonquil-coloured paint which the worldly-minded job-carriage man, into whose hands it had fallen, had daubed it, in order that it might once more take its way among the haunts of men. Miss Sharpe, it seems, (greatly against her will) was to be of the party; for even then, at the eleventh hour (much to the amusement of the young gentlemen at Mammon House, who were at their usual post, looking over the wall); she blushed, simpered, hesitated, advanced, drew back, fidgetted, and annoyed everybody by entreating that Miss Flippens might be taken in her stead, "as she is," added Miss Sharpe, "so much more fond of gaiety than I am."

"Nonsense, Miss Sharpe! do get in, and don't keep us all day," cried Miss James out of patience.

I plainly perceived that I was the *bête noire*, whom

Miss Sharpe dreaded, and would gladly have relieved her from my presence, but knowing that to offer to remain behind would be useless, I did not add to the delay by proposing it; at length being fairly (or rather unfairly) wedged and launched, Miss Sharpe *pour se donner une contenance*, hazarded the original remark that she thought the meeting would be very amusing.

"Why—a—not egzactly," responded Mr. Perkins, pulling up his shirt-collar with much gravity, as if he had the fear of the Archbishop of Canterbury before his eyes—and the walls of Lambeth Palace in sympathy with the north-east dining-room wall at Siedlitz Lodge had lain crumbling at his feet.

"I mean inter*ess*ting," (for, of course, so she pronounced the word, interesting) said Miss Sharpe, correcting herself with much colouring and fidgeting, which latter was an operation not only of difficulty but of danger, wedged as we were, for Miss Omeny always carried a pair of scissors in her pocket, whether with the intention of bringing Mr. Perkins to the point in one way or another, or of cutting the connexion in case she failed, I know not;—as the truth upon that, as upon many other equally important subjects, has never transpired.

"What o'clock is it, Mr. Perkins?" asked Miss James.

"Why," replied that gentleman, digging up his turnip and consulting it, "I fear I'm raythor slow

(very I thought); for though I always set my watch by the Oss Guards, I never can get it to go by it."

"There is one excuse to be made for it," said I, glancing at the admirable imitation of block-tin which the said watch presented, "the Horse Guards are so much better mounted."

"Oh, Miss Sedley! do show Mr. Perkins your watch; I think it is the greatest little beauty I ever saw."

"I have not mine with me," said I, affecting to feel for it.

"Dear me!" said Miss James, "how very careless you are; isn't she, Miss Sharpe?"

"Yes," assented Solomon the Second, now looking at me for the first time since we had been packed. "I must say, Miss Sedley, that you forget everything."

"Well," said I, laughing, "as long as it is only things it don't much matter; but I hope I shall never forget any person, not even myself."

"I cannot conceive why you don't wear your watch outside, and then you would not forget it—such a lovely little watch, too, would be such an ornament," said Miss James.

"I dislike the idea of a watch by way of an ornament, if it is ever so pretty; I think it looks vulgar in that capacity," replied I.

"I should think," said Miss James, bridling with proud superiority, "that *I* must be rather a better

judge than you on those, and all other points, Miss Sedley, and therefore I desire for the future that you will wear your watch outside; and Miss Sharpe you will have the goodness to see that Miss Sedley does wear it so, and every morning that she forgets to put it on, you will impose either an imposition, or a forfeit for the omission."

"Very well, Um," assented Miss Sharpe with conscious dignity, once more understanding why she had been created, and exulting (as all should do) in the fulfilment of her mission, while I, equally in my vocation, began to think that this was like my luck: three years had I been under Miss James's judicious and deputy-maternal care, and never before had she, or any of her staff remarked, or cared how I wore my watch, or whether I wore it at all. I may as well end this subject here, by at once stating that of course the next morning, not being able to produce the watch, and after much lecturing and cross-questioning, being obliged to own that I had lost it (as indeed I'm sorry to say I had for ever)—thinking I suppose that this was not a sufficient loss of time, Thomson was called in, and my "way of life" fell instantly "into the sear and yellow leaf," by being compelled to learn the whole of "Winter" by heart, or rather by head, which I think settled an annuity of colds on me, though of course ever since I have religiously avoided an English winter when I could. Miss Sharpe, too, it was, who ordered the execution, and I said to myself, as she

passed the awful sentence, *Et tu Brute!* but thou hast strange antithetical masques and myths, oh, Nemesis! in our poor little molehill of a world: and yet this was nothing, a mere "taste of their quality," for they begin in "mouthing," but generally end by "tearing a passion to tatters!"

Arrived at the meeting, we found as Mr. Perkins had prognosticated, that we were late—the crowd was immense and the heat suffocating, though the day without was cold, neither was the odour agreeable—although no doubt it was that of sanctity. Mr. Perkins spread his wings, and tucking Miss James under one, and Miss Omeny under the other, strutted forward a step or two like a triumphant bantam; but the cram being sufficient to have regaled a whole farm-yard, it was too much for Mr. Perkins to manage singly (I say singly, as his companions were certainly no chickens), and consequently it only repelled his advances, which, at all events, the former had never done. Miss Sharpe and I were left to make our own way—no very easy thing for women to do in this world under any circumstances; but under the present, an utter impossibility.

"Oh! oh! I shall faint," gasped Miss Sharpe, "that's flat."

"No, it would be very natural," rejoined I; "but pray don't, for fainting to do it properly requires space, and here I really don't think a fly could find room to sneeze—if they ever do such a thing."

While Miss Sharpe was still repeating her intention (despite my remonstrances), of suspending her own individual animation, a labour which at any time would have been cousin German to a sinecure, I perceived a great, gaunt man, pushing his way down, or rather stretching out his arm over several heads, as he brandished a flaming torch in the shape of a scarlet and yellow silk pocket handkerchief, while he stood upon an upper bench, and presently I heard my own name, and the following invitation to Miss Sharpe, and myself uttered in broad Scotch.

"Whisht! eh? hist! Miss Marian, my dear, tsit! Speer this way, and I'll make room for you, and the other lassie wi' ye." Upon looking again I recognised the hard, and not over prepossessing features of Colonel Clavering; but exclusive of his good nature in offering us seats, and by so doing, perhaps, preventing our being crushed to death; my heart bounded towards him, hard and forbidding as he was, for the last time I had seen him was at dear, dear——! and a whole Odyssee of associations was conjured up in my heart, gilt with the rays of childhood's first cloudless sun of love! and green with youth's first luxurious hopes! so many of which had already withered and strewed my path with autumn leaves, though I was yet in Spring—I was a fool, but could not help it, and burst into tears; however, it was but a momentary weakness. No alchymist surprised by the profane, at his mysterious labours, could have felt more annoyed

than I did at having let the crucible of my heart (the only one that ever *does* make gold), thus publicly boil over; but I hurried it out of sight, and drying my eyes with the assistance of Colonel Clavering's ossified unyielding hand, which felt as if it had itself petrified in "dealing damnation round the land," I began making the ascension of the *montagne verte*. Not one of the already seated males moved, or made way; on the contrary, it was astonishing how hacknied that truly English quotation of

"Possession is nine points of the law"

became, and poor Miss Sharpe was even greeted with:

"I say, young woman, mind what you are about there; first come, first served, if *you* please."

To which a deep bass voice chimed in:

"Ay, ay, every one for himself, and God for us all."

So that I very soon began to perceive, that though this was a meeting convened for the propagation of Christianity, it was on the plan of "Hamlet" at the country theatre, with the part of "Hamlet" left out by particular desire. At length there was a great "hush," and Mr. Wilberforce appeared on the platform. He commenced by giving the persons then and there assembled many interesting details of the creation of the world, which, nevertheless, I thought were quite as well, not to say better, described in the first

chapter of Genesis, dwelling particularly on the circumstance of every thing having been originally created in pairs, and then again saved in pairs at the time of the Deluge, of which fact Mr. Perkins began busily making notes, as if it was the first time it had come to his knowledge, which really was ungrateful as well as oblivious, with such a practical illustration, and working out of the system as he had on either side of him, in the fair forms of Miss James and Miss Omeny. If words, words, words, one weak, washy flow of words, constitute eloquence, why, then, Mr. Wilberforce was certainly eloquent; but I scarcely think it can, for at that rate would the parish pump be eloquent, especially in the dog days. I think it is Lord Byron who says, he "doubts if the English have any eloquence properly so called." I don't doubt it at all, for I am very sure that they have not; nor could they possibly have any, from the triple influence of their laws, education, and temperament, for enthusiasm is the source of all eloquence; and they have no enthusiasm, and consequently no eloquence, and never attain nearer to it than fluency, which is only the pump, and not the well spring.

In France, they still have orators, for eloquence did not become a traditional effigy on the Tomb of Mirabeau; this, all who have heard Berryer in the Chamber of Deputies, Lamartine in or out of it, and the *Père Lacordaire* at Nôtre Dame will acknowledge, for eloquence is an electric fluid which makes thousands of

cold hearts and inert spirits leap at one bound to its own high standard, and vibrate in unison with its finer sympathies; and where this "touch of feeling that makes all nature kin," does *not* exist, depend upon it there is no eloquence. "Who has not suffered knows nothing," says Fénélon: and for this reason, the Irish, French, Poles, and Italians are eloquent; and the English are not, for in them matter predominates, suffering only as they do from a plethora of prosperity, and an indigestion of wealth, with excruciating paroxysms of chronic arrogance; however, the disease is now at its height, and little as they may think it, a crisis must soon take place in their constitution; but it is on all these accounts that eloquence is not indigenous to their soil, for it is not a household grain to be sown by rude hands in fat pastures, and reaped at stated periods, but a seed germinated near Heaven, and dropped by eagles upon devastated plains and ruined empires, where it takes deep root, and its very luxuriance springs from desolation.

Mr. Wilberforce flowed on, till half-past four, and then it appears the pump was dry, at all events, the audience were, as I heard several gentlemen near me graphically and metaphorically express their sensations and sentiments, and yet the orator had not kept them very long, considering the immense distance he had escorted some of the inhabitants of the united kingdoms, and the terribly warm reception he had prepared for them, though some of his hearers, Colonel Clavering

among the number, complained that he had not dwelt adequately upon eternal punishments, nor quoted Calvin sufficiently on that head. For my part, like Frederick the Great, when some of his subjects were equally displeased with a Lutheran preacher, who did not even hint at eternal punishments, I also thought it a great pity that people could not be d—d as long as they liked, especially when so many take such pains to go to the d—l, it really is not worth while if it is only to be for a short visit.

Going out, Colonel Clavering began asking me about my uncle, when I told him that he was almost, if not quite blind; the horrid old wretch began muttering something about its being a judgment on him for not seeing the doctrines of Calvin in a proper light. It was lucky for this disciple of fire and faggot, that the lightening in my eyes, at that moment, had not power to kill, but I checked myself, and merely said:

"It would seem, Colonel Clavering, that you are so deafened by the anethemas of Calvin, that you never heard our Saviour's words touching the fall of the Tower of Siloam."

He was about to reply, no doubt, in sulphureous flames of Nyon brimstone, when we were forcibly separated by the pressure of the crowd, and when we again met, he had his hand full of tracts and printed hand-bills, for he was one of those sort of sectarian virtuosos who hunt up the curiosities of faith in every

possible nook or corner where anything sufficiently damnatory was to be found.

"Weel, my dear Miss Mariam," said he, offering me one of the handbills, "os I see yer endavering to tak care of yer soul's halth, I'll e'en put you in the way of doing it effactually, for it's to be hopped y'ave heerd of the new sect ca'd the Stumpites, fra hoving been foonded by a pious ond anspired woman o' the name o' Keren Happuch Stump, wha has recaved a more woonderful mission aven than Johanah Southcote; for though saventy-twa, it hos been announced to her in a vasion, that she is pragnent of Judas Iscariot, wha being thus born again, wal be born unto rightiousness, and than Christ wal return to earth to forgave him pooblicly, and the Melanium begin for all true belavers, while unbelavers will see the ground at Smethfield gave way wi a great crack, like that of doom, and the deil and all his angels cooming up in hell fire to corry them into averlasting pardition. Now here is a paper wi' the holy woman's address: No. 5, Fox Court, Liquorpond Street, Chancery Lane, admission half-a-croon; though the piously disposed, ond those onxious to hurry the Malenium, may gie as much more as they plase; for the regenerated Judas conna be born till sooch time as Keren Happuch has recaved from true belavers sufficient siller to buy a goold cradle, set wi' jules for the babe."

"I think she is quite right," said I, "to put off the wonderful event till then, because, you know should it

never take place, it will not be her fault, but that of the infidels who love their thirty pieces of silver quite as much as the old Judas did, and would, many of them, were the temptation thrown in their way, resort to the same means of procuring them, without, however, having the grace to go out and hang themselves afterwards. It is to be hoped," concluded I, "that your pious friend, Mrs. Stump, is like her namesake, Job's youngest daughter, 'the fairest woman in all the land,' for her seventy-two years can be no barrier to her youthful bloom, as, of course, she finds it as easy to get over them externally, as internally."

Thanks to his habitual confusion of ideas, poor Colonel Clavering fancied, through some strange jumbling process of his brain, that I was abounding in his views of Mrs. Stump's extraordinary promises, and so cried out, as Mr. Perkins hurried me into the "glass coach," asserting the while, with almost tears in his eyes, that we should be late for dinner.

"Ah, weel, my dear Miss Mariam, ye'll mind no to be later than sax o'clock to-morrow avening at Fox Court, and racollect as much more than half-a-croon as ye like to gi, and ony stray lambs that ye can bring into the right fold, do."

I thought to myself, as I re-wedged between Miss Sharpe and Miss Omeny, that if Mr. Pinchbeck was "polite" enough to wait at the door of 'The Pig and Whistle' tavern till I came, he would certainly have time to contract a more serious catarrh, than any

arising even from the vapours of the Gulgoose river; while, on the other hand, should Colonel Clavering deem it necessary to be equally courteous, at the entrance of Fox Court, not only would he have leisure to collect sufficient currents of air to cool those more intensely hot regions, whither he was so fond of sending people, whose "souls' health" required a warm climate, as he, the physician-general of all souls, deemed, but Mrs. Stump would likewise have ample time for her *accouchement*, even without waiting for the gold cradle; each new page I turned—not of the book, but of the ledger of life—I found on the balance-sheet a debit of disappointment, or disgust. The beautiful maxim of Christianity is—

"Do unto others as you would they should do unto you."

But *soi-disant* Christians of all sects seem, more or less, to have adapted it to the new tariff of

"*Do* others as they would *do* you."

During the short drive back to Kensington, the pace we went was not "brisk," and conversation was decidedly "dull," as Mr. Perkins would have commercially expressed it; although Miss James and Miss Omeny were both "looking up"—to Mr. Perkins, in the hope he would speak, but Mr. Perkins was hungry, and consequently had not yet digested the many tough things which Mr. Wilberforce had given him to

swallow; so when asked his opinion of the meeting he briefly stated, "that what they had heard required much stoody;" while Miss Sharpe ventured upon a less equivocal panegryic, by asserting, that she thought it "most inter*est*ing." And here a dead silence ensued, till we reached Concave House, where we unloaded to the same chorus, over the wall of Mammon House, to which we had started, and which reminded me of that line in the "Siege of Corinth," which says:

"I saw the lean dogs on the wall!"

It is sad to think that even in the briefest absence from home, some dire event, or irreparable misfortune, may occur, as was proved by Jemima's opening speech, when we reached the hall, where, advancing to meet Miss James, with all the perturbation of manner superindooced (as Mr. Perkins would have said) by strong excitement, she exclaimed:

"Lor! em, what hever will ye do? There's the gherkins gone!—vanished!—disappeared!—can't be found nowhere. I've hasked heverybody hin the ouse—young ladies, governesses, servants, Tibbs, and hall; and nobody haint took 'em, nobody haint seen 'em, and nobody knows nothink at all about 'em. And has for cats—cats his of no use where pickles hand perserves his concerned; no more use, I may say, nor a wedding-ring would be to a hold maid."

I myself thought, and always shall think, that it was this last ill-chosen simile of Jemima's, that threw Miss James into such a fearful passion. Instead of being cool as a cucumber, which would have been more germain to the matter, she vowed she would turn all the servants out of the house; and as for young ladies, not to miss the culprit, they should every one of them have two double lessons a-day, for the next month to come—and that would teach them how to meddle with things intended expressly for Mr. Perkins. How was he to dine without pickles, pray? There were none eatable to be got at Kensington, and there was no time to send Tibbs off again to Fortnum's and Masons, for the geese must be already over-done. *Could* Mr. Perkins, for once, eat Indian pickle?

Mr. Perkins, with the most ravenous *empressement*, and a leer almost as hot as the proposed pickles, assured Miss James that he could "heat hanything; honly," added he, "let it be himmejet, has I ave a patient to see at seven; though I shall not be so remiss as not to return to tea."

Thus re-assured, Miss James postponed all further vengeance about the missing gherkins, and ordered dinner to be brought up directly; while she herself, albeit unused to *con spirito* movements, scaled the back-staircase, like a whirlwind, till she reached the store-room, and there seized a jar of pickles, that

might have suited the palate of his Satanic Majesty himself, who must be an epicure in the pickles of all nations.

I had scarcely time to take off my things, before dinner was announced; and I found that Jemima had by no means exaggerated Mr. Perkins's extraordinary gastronomic *tours de force*, both as to the quantity and quality of his repast. When, however, his hunger had in some degree subsided, under the influence of almost the whole of one goose, nearly an orchard of apple-sauce, and innumerable cataplasms of mustard, Mr. Perkins vanished, and Glauber Rodolphus! appeared. He first asked Miss James to take wine, then Miss Omeny, then Miss Sharpe, and then me, *da capoing* to Miss James; after which, looking tenderly at her, he placed his wide-spread hand impartially upon the front of his waistcoat, not inclining it more to one side than to the other, but preserving a *juste milieu*, and said his "'eart was full;" which I thought a very delicate way of expressing it. A sigh from Miss Omeny (which, however, she had tried to drown in another glass of sherry) reminded him, that if his 'eart was full, the more reason why he should give of its abundance to all: so pantomimically washing his hands, as he spoke, as if to take the wise precaution of being "off with the old love, before he was on with the new," he asked Miss Omeny, in his most emollient voice, if he might ave the pleasure of *assist-*

ing her to some of the *boosom* of the, as yet, uncut goose; and then, before she had time to say yes or no, he added:

"Sweet thing, that 'When thy boosum eaves a sigh,'" and actually began humming it, that the bare pinion of the bird, which he most scientifically amputated, and sent to Miss Omeny, might appear the result of aberration of mind, brought on by musical enthusiasm. It was astonishing the number of ales, wines, and liqueurs, Mr. Perkins was requested by his fair amphytrions to give his opinion of; so that after dinner, by the time a bottle of Claret was produced, (one of six dozen that Miss James had taken in part payment of a bad debt, incurred for the *non*-tuition of a wine-merchant's daughter) and Mr. Perkins was pronouncing it "too thin," his voice became so thick, that it was not very intelligible, especially as at the same time seizing a pear from one dish, and an apple from another, he *à propos de botte*, became polemical and argumentative.

"This ere," said he, tapping the pear approvingly, his the principle hof creation, hall in pairs—hall in pa-i—has Mr. Wilberforce told hus. While this ere willainous concern," he added, fillipping the apple with such vengeance, that it rolled headlong across the table into Miss Omeny's lap, "his the principle of destruction; for has by pairs hall mankind was crehated, so by happles hall mankind was destroyed; that his to say, d—d! For what we have received, the Lord make

hus truly thankful (you told me to sa Grace, did'nt you?) Well, has I was a go—going to hobserve touching pai—that his couples hand coupling—"

"Miss Sedley, you may retire," said Miss James; and right glad was I for the permission, as at that time, I had never seen any one in the disgusting state Mr. Perkins was.

When I got up stairs, Miss Dickens, (whose indisposition I am happy to say, had not increased,) eagerly demanded an account of the day's adventures, which I gave her as soon as Helen and Jessey would let me speak, and I had returned their affectionate greetings. When I narrated the episode of the missing gherkins, Miss Dickens laughed to that degree, that I was afraid she would in reality make herself ill.

"Oh! Miriam," said she, as soon as her laughter would allow her to speak, "I'll never forgive you if you don't write either a poem, an epitaph, or a song, upon the mysterious disappearance of the gherkins, or a parody, beginning—

"Oh where, and oh where,
Are my Rodolph's gherkins gone?"

and dedicate it to Miss James, *without* permission."

"No," said I, laughing, "I think it ought to be something original, in honour of Mr. Perkins;" and I improvised to the tune of "Polly Hopkins," a song which I know was "received with unbounded applause"

at the time, and was so popular, that it became the school-room anthem at Concave House, and was always struck up whenever Miss James or Miss Omeny had appeared, or were about to appear; but at this distance of byegone years, I can only remember the commencement, which opened in the following police-report strain:

> Young ladies, which of you stole the gherkins?
> Oh! which of you say—which of you say?
> Meant for Glauber Rodolphus Perkins,
> On Michaelmas-day—on Michaelmas-day?

That said 29th of September was an eventful night! for how could even an imaginary wall fall down at Seidlitz Lodge, without a sympathetic crash taking place at Concave House. We had been some hours in bed, and yet I could not sleep: the meeting, with Colonel Clavering had roused a whole train of memories which, even if they sometimes slumbered, never slept. Also, the wind was high, and Madame Beccacia was very restless in her bed, which, like an oppressed creature, as it was, groaned and creaked even more than usual, and then it was answered by the wind violently shaking the windows, as if they, being so quiet themselves, were reproaching it for not letting them rest. I heard a neighbouring clock strike three; I also thought I heard the inner door of the washing-room stealthily open, and creak on its hinges; but

this was again of course only the wind, which, like an extensive commercial traveller, as it is, seemed to have business in all directions on this night. Madame Beccacia had just turned heavily in her bed, with her usual obligato accompaniment of groans and sighs; and as one good turn deserves another, I also turned to the side next the wall, to try and overtake sleep there; and at the expiration of another hour, was just about to do so, when a crash, certainly as loud as that of an earthquake would be at Laputa, effectually roused me; and I heard Madame Beccacia announce, in most lugubrious tones, her own extraordinary and triangular demise in the following words:—

"Oh! oh! I am smothered! drowned! and strangled!"

"I hope not," said I, cautiously putting one foot out of bed; "you seem in very good spirits, at all events, for there is a strong smell of brandy!"

"Brandy, indeed! my poor dentifrice! Oh! this has never happened by fair means; and if I live—which I don't expect to do—I'll take care to have the vile perpetrators of this scandalous plot punished as they deserve."

Unfortunately, in those days there were neither vestas nor lucifers (though always plenty of devils), and I had to grope my way to the fireplace to find the bell that rang up into the maids' room; having at length done so, I rang it violently, and then begged of Madame Beccacia not to move till the light came;

for I now clearly perceived that the frustrated *émeute* of the other night had taken place in my absence.

"I am not very likely to move," groaned that unfortunate stout gentlewoman, "when I believe I have come through the school-room ceiling, and am wedged in the rafters, to say nothing of being stuck as full of pieces of broken bottles as a garden wall."

"Good heavens!" cried I, "you don't say so; that is really shocking."

"Ay, those who have done it shall find it shocking; you may depend upon that, Miss Sedley."

"Surely," said I, now seriously alarmed that this jest had been carried farther than anything could warrant, "you don't suppose any one would be so wicked as to hurt you on purpose?"

"I really will do you the justice to say, Miss Sedley, that I don't think you would; but with Jessey Fane, and Helen Penrose, you are the only exception I make in the whole school."

An "Oh! oh! Madame Beccacia, how can you say so?" uprose simultaneously athwart the darkness, from the stanch Protestants among the insurgents.

"I not only say it, but I'll prove it to-morrow, to your costs; and the young lady that's the most silent of all, I suspect the most of all; and that there may be no mistake, I mean Miss Mary Anne Dickens!"

"Me Mem!" said a mincing wolf's voice, in sheep's accents, purporting to be the accused's, but which was

in her life, as
[illegible].

Here Jemima
conscientiously
general, or eve
account of its
very short, and
worsted stocking
short dimity bed
cap, with a ramp
papers round the
in her hand she
candlestick, the t
up indignantly,
of twenty differen
hand being the
chivalry in it, to
"What hever h
and hall the 'poth

the immediate scene of the catastrophe, and then once more burst forth with "Well, I never! did hanybody hever? Why there you lays, Madam Beckhatchyou, like a wreck a-shore, hand, hat the same time, like a weasel just launched, with a bottle of brandy smashed agin your figure-head!"

Jemima's description was pretty accurate; for the sacking had been so insidiously cut as to give way on the outer side, and so precipitate Madame Beccacia forward in such a manner, that she must infallibly upset the small, and somewhat ricketty chest of drawers in her fall, which, being old, and loose, opened, as they fell, the dentifrice coming in violent contact with her, and the indignant bottle dashing itself from the Tarpeian rock of her forehead, from whence it rebounded in countless fragments on the floor.

"For Heaven's sake, help me up, Jemima," moaned poor Madame Beccaccia, staunching a slight wound on her forehead, as she further deposed that she believed she was bleeding to death.

"Here," said Jemima, stooping down, and steeping an unfolded pocket-handkerchief, that had fallen from one of the drawers, in the stream of Cognac that still flowed, and making an attempt to apply it to Madame Beccaccia's head, who, however, drew back in horror, "there haint nothink better than brandy for a wound hof any sort."

"Brandy!" groaned Madame; "it's not brandy; it's dentifrice; the stuff I use for my teeth.'

"Well, hit's hall the same," persisted Jemima; "hand whathever his good for the teeth, hit stands to reason, must be good for the ead; that his, has long has there's a tooth hin it."

But even this scientific analysis of comparative anatomy could not induce Madame Beccaccia to smart any more, as she thought she was smarting quite enough from the application of the dentifrice already. So with Jemima's assistance, I began excavating the unhappy sufferer from her encumbered estate; which, not being a Whig measure, was a great relief to her, and saved her from, instead of effecting her ruin.

As poor Madame Beccaccia's forehead still continued to bleed, after she had been raised up, and set upon her feet, Jemima again expressed her sentiments:

"Lor, a-mercy! what a squash to be sure! here will be a raising of the ouse; and a sending hoff for Glauber Rodolphus. You better sit down, Um, hon Miss Sedley's bed; for you goes all wiggle-waggle still; quite shook like, with the fall."

"Just light my candle," groaned the wounded bird; "and then Miss Sedley, my dear, would you have the goodness to go down with Jemima? Wake Miss James, and beg of her to come up here; for I am determined that she shall herself investigate the piece of wickedness."

Having covered Madame Beccaccia with a shawl,

we departed on our embassy; for Miss James slept on the ground floor, in a small room overlooking the garden.

"Embower'd in the shade that the passion flowers twined."

As we crossed the hall, the dining-room door was open; Jemima gave a slight scream, and caught hold of my arm.

"What on earth is the matter?" asked I.

"Look! look! Miss; I could be sworn as I see Perkins (though I let him out myself at eleven o'clock) crossing the dining-room;" as she spoke the wind blew the door to.

"Nonsense!" said I, laughing. "The fact is, Mr. Perkins is here so much, that I suppose the rooms have got a look of him, just as women's bonnets and men's hats certainly do grow like them."

"Then we'll get a look of him too, hif he's in the ouse!" cried Jemima, valiantly flinging open the dining-room door, where the effigy of Mr. Perkins was certainly visible to a certain extent; for, perpendicularly placed in one corner of the square sofa was his umbrella, and on the top of it, his hat, and these it was, that had occasioned Jemima's optical illusion.

"Humph!" said the latter, putting her left arm a-kimbo, and shaking the tin candlestick deprecatingly at the hat, "where hever there his a at, there should be a ead!"

"Not surely, in this instance, Jemima; for it would be rather uncomfortable, I should think, stuck on the top of an umbrella!"

"De-pend upon it, there's a somethink! Does it stand to reason that a man, or heven a pothecary, should go hout of a night has his a-blowing blacksmith's bellows, hand leave his at home behind him?"

"Not to reason, certainly, but to the want of it; for it is very natural, I should think, for a man to lose his hat after he has lost his head, which I can bear witness to Mr. Perkins having done at a very early hour last evening."

"Perkins lose his ead!" echoed Jemima, snapping her fingers with ineffable contempt. "When did he ave one to lose, I should like to know? Lose his happetite he might, though hI can witness, hand so can the wittles, that he never as lost it yet in this ouse; but, as for losing his ead!—no, no; the thing's an unpossibility! Mark my words, there's a somethink!"

"Not in Mr. Perkins's head, surely, Jemima!"

Miss Gannet, now taking the candlestick in her left hand, shook the fore-finger of her right hand at Mr. Perkins's hat and umbrella, and, passing on, gave so loud and startling a knock with one end of the iron snuffers on Miss James's bed-room door, that it never could have been equalled before or since, except by Jupiter in a storm, or a London footman in the season, in the days of those nerve-nuisances, knockers, which,

thank Heaven, modern good taste has exploded, except for the vulgar, who adopt that sort of "appeal to the public," as the only means left to them of making a noise in the world. Poor Miss James, not being dead, soon answered this gentle summons, and, slipping on a dressing-gown and shawl, prepared to accompany us up stairs, stopping, however, *en route*, before Mr. Perkins's casquet and shield, *vulgo*, hat and umbrella, and with clasped hands, making a sort of Andromacha soliloquy over it, the purport of which was, that he had gone without them, and would get his death of cold.

"Like enough," growled Jemima, who was bringing up the rear; "has he's sure halways to take what hever *he can get*."

As soon as Miss James had condoled with Madame Beccaccia, each of the young ladies underwent a midnight review, or rather court-martial, but, like the two thieves in Æsop's fable of the "Cook Shop," all took refuge in an equivocation, one saying: "I did not plan the mischief;" and another: "I did not do it." At length Madame Beccaccia, with gigantic strength (considering her recent wounds and loss of blood), flung the pin that united Miss Dickens's curtains on the ground exclaiming:

"Here, Mem, you'll find the real culprit!"

"But, alas! like many other prophecies, though true in spirit, this was false in substance, for the bed was tenantless, and on the pillow was a note addressed to Miss James. Madame Beccaccia's arms fell motionless

by her sides, and, altogether, she appeared even more stunned than by her fall, while Miss James read out the following note from Miss Dickens, which abounded in those elegancies of diction and style which that young lady had acquired during a four years' course of English literature at Concave House. Poor Miss James! it fell from her hand towards the conclusion, and I picked it up, and read to myself the remainder:

"Dear Miss James,

"It would be useless at the present moment to enter into the particulars of my engagement to my dear Algernon, nor am *I going to*. I know you have been in love with Mr. Perkins for many years, and therefore must have felt *just like I did*, and so will, I hope, instead of being angry at the step I have taken, *help me* excuse it to Pa and Ma, brothers and sisters, of whom, thank heaven! I am quite independent in point of fortune, and consequently free to act as I like; for, as I have often heard you say, money is might all the world over. My love to Ma and Tilly, as I know *Ma and her* are coming on Tuesday. Tell them Algernon is everything I could wish, and so indeed are all his brother officers, who have given us every assistance in their power. I hope Mr. Perkins won't fret about his gherkins, but I took them, thinking they would be better than what we should get on the road. Put them down in my bill, *please:* and tell Mr. Perkins I'll send him some more, and also some marmalade from dear

Scotland, half way to which I hope to be before you receive this. I only hope your affair with Mr. Perkins may end as happily. But I don't know what to wish for poor Miss Omeny, as Glauber Rodolphus, not being a spread eagle, you know can't marry you both; so you see it is neck or nothing! only don't believe that bam of Mrs. P. the first, being still alive, but make a dead set at Perkins at once, which is the advice of yours,

"Thank Heaven! for the last time
"MARY ANNE DICKENS.
"(Soon to be FITZ PIPECLAY.")

Poor Miss James's hysterics on this occasion were real, as she felt that even in sending Miss Dickens's vulgar and unfeeling letter to her parents, she was only doubly publishing the disgrace of Concave House. The hat and umbrella on the dining-room sofa turned out to be Lieutenant Fitz Pipeclay's, whose name figured in the inside of the hat, and also an amber-coloured silk handkerchief.

"Lor! how beautiful it do smell to be sure! wery different from Perkins's!" said Jemima, burying her face in the handkerchief.

And yet both Mr. and Mrs. Algernon Fitz Pipeclay continued to be *en très mauvaise odeur* in Miss James's "Establishment" for many a long day after.

CHAPTER V.

It was a gloomy, miserable, November day, half fog, half frost; not unlike an amalgamation of the English character; and I was sitting at one of the school-room windows begging alms of Heaven for sufficient light to read "The Heart of Mid-Lothian" by, when a loud ring came to the gate. In a school, like a prison or a cloister, everything is an event, for hope's couriers always come at full speed, upon the unusual or the vague. My book was instantly closed upon poor Jenny Dean's kneeling to the Queen, and my eyes rivetted upon the window; in a very short time, Tibbs the ubiquitous! came running to open the great gates, and a shabby-looking yellow chariot, with unmistakeably jobbed and jaded horses, and a coachman to match, drove in; a servant, evidently not a London

one, in a drab livery with red facings, and plush-breeches, sitting beside him.

The carriage drove up to the door, the servant dismounted and rang the bell; Jemima came to the door. I did not hear who the servant asked for, but seeing two gentlemen in the carriage, I did not much suppose it was for me; however, the window was now let down, the door opened, and the steps lowered, and out jumped a flagrantly bad style of looking man, with a very red face, an unrecovered tract of whisker, his hat on one side, a braided surtout lined with fur, large silver spurs, and a heavy silver-mounted hunting-whip, which he stuck into his right-hand pocket as he held out his hand to assist his companion to alight, who did so very infirmly, leaning heavily on the frogged sleeve of the surtout, his hand trembling violently the while. Of this personage's face I could see little, as a shawl came up all round his mouth and chin, but the little I did see was very pale, and his hair rather long and perfectly white, which led me to suppose he was a very old man. They entered, and thinking it could not be for me, I turned from the window with a sigh, and returned to poor Jenny Deans; but in my haste to watch the arrival, I had very foolishly not noted the place where I had left her, and was now hunting through the whole book to find her, when the door opened and Jemima appeared, saying:

"Please, Miss Sedley, you are wanted in the parlour, to see two gentlemen."

"You had better let Miss James know," said I; for ever since Miss Dickens's elopement, we were never allowed to give even Mrs. Quince an audience without Miss James in person being present, which must have been a sad tax upon the course of Natural Philosophy with Mr. Perkins.

"Oh! Miss James is down a-ready," responded Jemima. My heart now began to beat violently, I thought the two persons I had seen might bring me some tidings of my poor father; for my intuition was on the track of an Irish cousin—that wilderness of uncultivated whisker, the flagrant partiality of the hat to the right ear, the long spurs, and the swampy surtout overrun with frogs—yes, yes, the whole achievement "gave the world assurance" of a Clanfuddle Brummel, but who could the other be? perhaps—and here followed a long string of quickly rejected perhapses, till I came to this most plausible one of all, that perhaps even the frogs and hairs might be mortgaged, and that the old gentleman (the only person who ever does look after Irish property!) was the mortgagee, come to keep an eye upon them. I locked up "The Heart of Mid-Lothian" in one of those little cross-barred, red leather school-trunks, which, like that other unfathomed mystery, a school-boy's pocket, holds more, all in containing less, than any similar space in the habitable globe.

I went down hastily, yet tremblingly, I did not know why, nor wherefore, except it was that those dark

rugged shadows that we call presentiments, with which Fate sometimes strews our inner world, shake the spirit quite as much in its passage over them, as the roughest roads in life's highway do the body. When Jemima flung open the dining-room door, Miss James was sitting dangerously on the edge of her chair, very perpendicular with her arms crossed, and her lips compressed; and no wonder, when so staunch a Protestant beheld the terribly Popish discipline, the gentleman in the bush—I mean the whiskers—was subjecting her innocent square horse-hair sofa to; for had it been the wearer of a hair shirt, it could not have received more violent flagellation, than that individual was now administering to one of its sides (over which his right arm hung) with the before-mentioned hunting-whip, while his left leg was luxuriously elongated upon the seat, with all the consummate ease of an old and perfectly welcome acquaintance; his hat and gloves doing the amiable the while to the Tunbridge work-box upon the Pembroke table, to Miss James's ineffable horror, who plainly perceived that the said work-box, alas! unlike the donor, Mr. Perkins, was coming to the scratch!

The elder or rather old man with the white hair, was standing with his back to the fire, and his hands behind his back, occasionally addressing some short sentence to Miss James, in a brief tone, and decidedly Irish accent, without its amounting to a brogue; this was evidently meant for conversation, as deeds, not words, appeared to be his companion's device, who,

during the castigation of the sofa, kept looking at the pictures and furniture round the room, and whistling (doubtless as an appropriate air) that charming *chansonnette* of "Dennis Brulgruthry," which so graphically describes the *ameublement* of the hero's cabin :—

> "My cabin was filled, though not very big,
> Wid powlthry and pictures,
> Three chairs and a pig."

As I entered the room, the elder stranger made two hasty steps forward, as if to meet me.

"Oh! murder, Man! fair play, or it's no bet: the voice of nathur was to spake," roared the individual in frogs, from the sofa, starting to his feet, and barring his companion's passage by placing his brawny arm before him. "Miss Miriam Sedley, my dear," continued he, "won of us two has the honour of being your father; which, the natheral failings of a daughther will, or ought, to decide—rightly, I hope, for the honour of the Sedleys; for every father likes to have a wise child" (and here he winked furiously at his companion); "however, my dear, all I can say is, that if you should make a mistake, and rush into the wrong arems, as far as I am concerned, from me heart I'll forgive you."

I became faint and sick at this address; my limbs trembled; the room went round; everything swam before my eyes. Was I dying?—was I dead? Oh! no, certainly not! Such intense suffering! the bitter

agony of a whole past and future life distilled, in a concentrated essence, into that one dreadful and overburdened moment was a too strong proof that I lived! But surely—surely that disgusting man could not be my father, if either of them were? The very doubt seemed salvation! I turned slowly round, dreading the investigation I had to make, yet feeling that it must be made. When I raised my eyes, I felt no disgust, thank God! but still, on the other hand, I felt nothing impel me forward, or tell me that, that poor palsied-looking being was *my* father, who, in years at least, was not much past forty; whereas the person before me looked considerably past sixty. All this, though long to write, was instantaneous in thought. Oh! most assuredly it was not the age, nor the white hair, that kept me back, for I loved all old men with white hair, for the sake of the *one* who in my heart was the type of all. What was it, then? I'm afraid it was the slovenly appearance, the look of premature decay, and the trembling hands; but presently I saw a tear overflow that dim, unconscious eye, and roll silently down the colourless cheek: and then I heard my own name pronounced, very faintly; and the voice that uttered it trembled, too. I did not hesitate any longer; how could I? for the voice, though feeble, was very kind. I don't know about nature, as she had been fast asleep till now; but I do know that memory has a whispering gallery in every heart, through which the faintest and most distant breath of

kindness vibrates more distinctly than the loudest call of the step-dame, Duty.

"Oh! it *is* you, dear papa," said I, rushing forward, and bursting into tears, as I threw my arms round his neck.

"Yes, it is my little Fairy Mirry's own poor papa—my dear, darling Mirry, my good child, who has not forgotten her poor old sea-weed of a father, though they did leave him to perish on his rock."

"No! no! dear papa, not to perish; God won't let you perish, for He knows, if you don't, how your poor little Mirry has prayed for you every night and morning, on her knees, and sometimes all day long, in her heart, since the night she left you."

"Don't say the night *you* left me, child; you'd never have left me. The night those two devils stole you out of your father's house—ay, and worse still, out of your mother's house—for you had a mother once, my poor Mirry——"

And he tottered to the sofa, and tore off the shawl that was round his throat, and flung it vehemently from him. I knelt at his feet, and kissed his poor trembling hands, as I burst into a fresh paroxysm of tears; for I don't know when I had been so happily unhappy a long time. My father took up masses of my hair in both his hands, and cried over it as he kissed it.

"See, Tom," said he, turning to his horrible companion, "what soft, silken, loving hair it is; as if it

was meant to build nests for all the broken spirits and wounded hearts in the world! Just like her poor mother's, and not the less like, because her mother's belongs to an angel now."

"'Pon my soul!" said the animal designated by the generic name of Tom, as he applied to his bleared, red eyes a crimson silk handkerchief almost as red, "I don't know when I've sane anything so purty as the whole scane, my dear Godfrey, since I was at the thayeter and saw the "Gracian Daughter;" and be dad! you've won your bet, and I'll pay you like a gentleman, and drink my purty cousin's health to boot. Six dozen of Chambertin vintage, 1811, with a dash of the comet's tail in it, and no mistake; and now, Ma'am," continued he, addressing Miss James, "I'll trouble you to order Miss Sedley's things to be packed up, for *me* cousin Godfrey, Misther Sedley, her father here, I see is in no state to attend to business, and small blame to him: it's not every day a man finds such a daughter. I declare, I meself (though, of course, the parental failings only flow in my busum in a collateral line) am quite entirely upset by it a thousand times more than I ever was by the worst inn's fifth bottle of worst port."

"Pray, Sir, may I ask," said Miss James, hastily brushing away a solitary tear that was beginning to exhale on the lash of her right eyelid, "to whom I have the honour of speaking?"

"Tom Lutron, Ma'am, at your or any other lady's

service, for I always prefer small change for ladies of a certain age; that is, two twenties for one forty, or four fifteeners for a dowager of sixty, and so on upwards. Let me see whether I've a pasteboard about me," and he searched all his pockets; "Divil a one! but the precise address is 'Tom Lutron, Bally Bluster, County Galway, Ireland.'"

"Any relation to Lord Lutron, may I inquire?" interrogated Miss James.

"His brother, Ma'am, or I should say, worse luck, his younger brother, that is, to the present man, for the old people never had the civility to consult my wishes on the subject, or I should have infinitely preferred a handle to my name, and a good cellar, which is hereditary at Mount Lutron, to merely having Bally Bluster, a handle to the pump, and not even a key to the cellar."

"Then I have the honour of speaking to the Hon. Mr. Lutron," said Miss James relapsing into her normal state of vulgarity.

"Why, as to that, Ma'am, it's more what the French term a *titre d'occasion*, or what we call a travelling title."

"What then, Sir," said poor Miss James, completely mystified, "are you not always the Honourable Mr. Lutron?"

"Always, Ma'am, when I put my name to a bill; that is, when a bill from a tradesperson is made out in my name; but when the same tradesman forgets him-

self, and what's due (not to himself, no fear of their doing that), but to a gentleman, and—ahem! a Lutron! and a man of my standing! (in his books), Ma'am, and degenerates into a dun, and wants to put his name to the same bill, in the shape of what's vulgarly called a receipt; then the rascals pretend, Ma'am, that I am no longer the Honourable man they took me for; I should say, mistook me for," and at the conclusion of this speech he winked at me, as my poor father's face was leaning on my head.

"I am extremely sorry, Sir, but it is my rule to consider that no one has authority to remove a young lady from my establishment but the individual who pays for them; and though placed here by Mrs. Marley, I have always received the remittances for Miss Sedley's board and tuition through Sir George Paulett's bankers."

"Why, d—n it, Madam," cried my father, starting up, "surely you are not going to come Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett over me, and dispute my right to my own child!"

"Far from it, Sir," replied Miss James, with the most iced-water placidity. "I merely mean to say that Miss Sedley cannot quit my establishment until her account is settled; for, were I to allow her to do so, I should have no claim upon Sir George Paulett for any further payment. I assure you, Sir, this is nothing personal to you. A few years ago, a little girl was placed under my charge by her father, whom I knew

to be an immoral and bad man in every sense of the word; he, however, left strict orders that his wife, whom he had turned out of his house, should never see her child; the poor lady came one day almost distracted to implore that I would let her see her little girl, but I told her I really dared not, as her father paid for her. You understand, Sir, it was nothing personal to her, for I had nothing to do with her and her husband's differences, except that I really was very sorry for her, knowing her to have been very ill-used; but I could not act otherwise as he paid me. It was the same when years after it pleased God to release this poor little sufferer: the poor mother made another, a last attempt to see her child on her death-bed, Dr. Marshall Killall turned her out of the house because ordered to do so by her husband, who paid him; so of course he was obliged to do what he ordered; he need not, perhaps, have done it quite so brutally; but then people can only act according to their nature."

"And pray was not this disgrace to humanity—I mean the brute of a doctor's employer—publicly hooted and kicked out of society?" said my father.

"Oh, dear, no Sir, for he's a rich man. I don't mean to say that ladies and gentlemen go to his house, but low authors, members of the press, actresses, and those sort of people do."

"They must be a precious set of blackguards who would herd with such a man," cried my father.

"Well, Sir, you see, with lies and money, a man

in this country will always get plenty to support him."

"Then more shame for the country," cried my father warmly.

"My dear Godfrey," said Tom Lutron, "don't excite yourself; it only proves what I always told you, that except for money and self-interest the English have no more hearts than petrified cricket balls; indeed, I don't doubt but the cricket balls have the more feeling of the two, for they, poor things, have been well kicked. And now, Ma'am, to come to the affections of the nation—I mean the L. S. D.—how much do your demands upon Sir George Paulett for Miss Miriam Sedley amount to?"

"There is only half a quarter due, Sir, which would be just thirty-seven pounds ten shillings; and with the few extras that Miss Sedley has incurred, as nearly as I can calculate without my books, it might be about thirty-nine pounds ten shillings."

"Then be so good as to get your books, Ma'am, and let me know the amount to the uttermost farthing, as I wish to convey to you a high idea of the understanding of Miss Sedley's relations; and to look through a microscope at half a farthing before one parts with it is, I am aware, the only way by which one can get credit for sense in this country."

Miss James needed no entreaties, but went instantly for her books.

"What on earth are you going to do, Tom?" asked my father.

"Do—why get your daughter, that pledge of your affection there, out of pawn; you're not going to leave my pretty coz any more with that old Fin an haddock of a looking vestal that has just left the room, I hope?"

"But didn't you hear her say that she would not give her up except to Sir George Paulett?" said my poor father, with a deep sigh and a painfully cowed look; for it was too merely physical to be dignified with the name of resignation.

"I heard no such thing, my dear Godfrey, but quite the reverse—that she'd give her up to nothing but the pounds, shillings, and pence; for she expounded the law of the land beautifully, and proved that the very devil would have right and might on his side if he paid for it; as you know, I'm not much addicted to paying, but still, once in a way, I don't mind playing the very devil with their infamous laws, and be d—d to them!"

"But the money, Tom? I haven't so much about me."

"I have."

"You!"

"Yes; fifty pounds that I was going to pay Schultz the tailor with."

"I'm very much obliged to you, very, my dear Tom; but what will Schultz do?"

"Wait—he's used to it."

Miss James returned after about ten minutes' absence. Upon second thoughts (besides the severe winter I had been made to pass with Thomson), she had thought fit to make me pay a shilling a-day "forfeit" for one month, for having lost my watch, so that my "little account" amounted to forty-one pounds ten shillings, as she said she had not charged anything for carriage hire, the day she took me to hear Mr. Wilberforce speak at Turnham Green, although she had insisted upon paying Mr. Perkins for the carriage. I have remarked that it is part of the commercial system of England, after any flagrant piece of extortion, to point out the forbearance that has been exercised towards you on the part of the extortioner, and how much more they might but for their kind forbearance have cheated you—a mode of consolation eminently calculated to impress upon a well-regulated mind, that "there is nothing so bad but it might have been worse," which may be termed the elixir of Job's comforters.

"Packing up," considering the extent of my worldly possessions at that time, was a more nominal ceremony, not so the parting with Helen and Jessy; but it was my fate apparently to have my heart uprooted from everything it clung to as soon as it had taken root. These sort of limpet hearts are foolish things, for attach themselves as they will, they are sure to find that it is only to the rock of disappointment after all,

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glad, but the effort only brought sufficient circulation to my poor numbed, heavy heart to make me comprehend in one pang what an unnatural, false, and exceptional position was mine. At seventeen, to again meet my father in a mystery, and a hurry, as I had been taken from him years before, only to feel that in finding a parent, I was indeed alone and unprotected on the wide, cold world. All my affections were planted, and pining elsewhere. All my tastes and habits were formed; and so, alas! were his, and both were wide as the poles asunder. Woe! woe! woe! to that perverse soul, be it that of parent, guardian, friend, or foe, which brands any human being with the foul and cruel wrong of a false and defenceless position, as it has entailed a hydra curse upon its victim, which time may increase, but cannot diminish; therefore let it not think that it, the evil-doer, shall go unscathed—no, verily! all who sow desolation shall reap it, piled-up and pressed-down, good measure, from God's great granary of retribution, where every wrong is garnered, and will be winnowed by His unerring justice.

A foggy drive through the Park, Oxford Street, and Bond Street, brought us to a dingy lodging in Maddox Street, nearly at the corner of George Street, at the other end of which, Sir Joseph Paulett had a fine house, looking into Hanover Square, and crammed with trophies of his conquests in Spain; namely, Velasquez, Murilos, Sartos, and the massive gold and silver spoils of convents. My father had slept

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nearly the whole way to town, as if overpowered by unusual exertion; and Tom Lutron had tried to make himself agreeable by making himself as disagreeable as possible—not an uncommon mistake with some men. Maurice, my father's old butler at Castle Sedley, whose name, at least, Nelly had preserved in my memory, opened the door. Great were the clasping of hands, and the tears, the poor man indulged in on seeing me, and the blessings he showered upon me. He too looked terribly infirm and old; he said it was the rheumatism.

"Sure, Miss, I do be on de rack wid it," said he. But to judge by his face, I greatly feared it was the bottle-rack he suffered from. On entering that smoky, gloomy, dirty abode, redolent as it was with concentrated odours of cats, punch, smoke, onions, and opodeldoc, I felt as if all the elasticity of spirit I ever possessed had been lost in the fog, and it, and I, should never meet again. My father leant on me on one side, and the bannister on the other; and, after a slow journey of easy stages, resting at each landing, we reached the drawing-room, where the fumes were of another kind, being those of defunct whisky-punch and cigars, which not even the purifying flames of the blazing fire, which Maurice now stirred, could mitigate. For a London lodging, I don't believe the rooms were very small, but they appeared so to me; and next to little minds, I do detest little rooms, for their confined and stinted atmosphere seems to narrow, compress, and

vulgarize one's every feeling. My father's bed-room was next the sitting-room (which Maurice dignified with the name of the drawing-room) he now went into it to be down before dinner, as he said; and Maurice coming in at the same time to lay the cloth in the sitting-room, fully explained its delightful perfumes.

"You see, Miss," said the latter, thinking it necessary to give some explanation of this anomaly, "it's too much trouble for the masther to be getting up and down stairs; so he and Masther Tom dine here quiet and sociably just."

"Is there any bed-room for me, Maurice?" asked I in a faint voice, not knowing how far the peculiar domestic arrangements might extend; or rather how limited they might be.

"Indade is there, Miss Miriam!" replied he, with a very knowing look; "and I don't think Quane Charlotte has a better; but for that matter, much worse, by raison of the ugly ould phiz she's compelled to see in her looking-glass, which won't be your case, Miss."

And flinging open the door with a great air, he preceded me up the second flight of stairs, where, taking a key out of his pocket, he gave such a thundering *réveillée* at the door, that any uninitiated person would have thought that he had studied hall-door pugilism, under a London footman, all his life. The door was immediately opened, and a vision, strange yet familiar,

met my view. A woman on duty (evidently as lady's-maid), in a bright plum-coloured twilled silk dress, quite new, and well made, with a clear muslin apron, and a high tulle French cap, with pink ribbons, very elaborate as they were then worn.

"Why, Nelly!"—but no, it could not be, for a distant and respectful curtesy, was the only reply, till Maurice thought fit to close the door, when Nelly, for it was Nelly, *quand même!* flung herself in the old style, on her knees, seized my hands, covered them with kisses, and burst into tears. I raised her, of course, and kissed her; and then standing at a little distance, as one does to admire any work of art, I exclaimed:

"Why, Nelly, you *are* 'grand to see!'"

Nelly shook her head, shut her eyes, placed her forefinger on her lip, and said: "Hush!" after which she added, with a sigh of relief: "De Lord be good to us; but I didn't know wheder de masther would succeed in getting you!"

"But even if you had been quite sure of it, Nelly, you need not have made yourself so splendid to receive me. I take it rather as a reproach; for don't you suppose that I should have been quite as glad to see you in any dress, even the dear old purple and orange cotton, to say nothing of the brown beaver bonnet, of stormy memory?"

"It's not dat, me darlint, I know you would," said Nelly, looking awfully solemn, and alarmingly wise; "but you see, deresh, Morrish and Pat Dowling, de

futman, who knowd you since you was dat high; and if I did not make meself a little grand on your account, to show what was jue to you, and how you ought to be trated, now that you are a fine grown young lady, de likes of them might be putting deir come hither, upon you, on account of ould times, and that would never do. Besides, I had to go for one or two tings for you to de fine big scinted soap shop, in Bond Strate; and dat all de tings might be of de best, as you'de always bane used to. I said dey was for Missh Shedley, and shure it wudn't do for Missh Shedley's maid to look like an ould apple-ooman, or Mrs. Jiff's, de tobacconist of Flate Strate itself!"

Poor Nelly! always the same unselfish, devoted creature: whether the sacrifice was to be her last crust in a shipwreck, or her first earnings in trade. I now looked round the room at her preparations; and as far as the place would admit, nothing could be nicer. The toilet was a perfect oasis in the desert, so white and so fresh did the white sprigged muslin look over the pink lining, and so prettily had she draped the looking-glass with white net, tied with pink ribbons. So far so well; but when I saw, not only all the perfumes, pommades, and amandines, she had bought, but also the pretty French china things, with roses and forget-me-nots on them, to put them in, I really was annoyed in the midst of all my gratitude, which was as sincere as her kindness was great.

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"Who sleeps in the next room, Nelly? I hope not that horrid Mr. Lutron."

"He did sleep dere, Missh; but, as soon as he and de masther turned deir backs dis morning, I soon shuck (shook) his thraps out of dat, and drifted him down schtairs; and now I schleep dere meself."

And as Nelly walked to the fire-place for the kettle, to pour some warm water into the basin for me, she flung open the door, to let me see that she had taken possession.

"Oh, thank you, Nelly. Then you are going to stay with me?"

"To be sure, I am. It's long enough dey've kep me from you."

"But how will poor Jeffs like your being away from him?"

"Stick him up wid likes! but indade I've nothing to say agin him. For a man, he's a dacent, quite bidable, well-behaved cracher, as ever was; and I toult him he might do ash he plaished, and go and coom in de houshe as fray as de cat while I wash away."

"Well, that really was kind of you, Nelly," said I, laughing.

"Oh, I hope you don't tink dat I alwaysh let him have hish way, Missh," said Nelly, accepting the compliment in the most unsuspicious manner; "but too tight lacing don't do for man or baste."

"Especially for poor Jeffs, I should think, who might miss stays. But how did you find out Papa was

in London, or how did he find you out, Nelly?" said I, as I seated myself before the glass, and she began brushing my hair; during which operation she gave me a long and minute detail of how Morrish had found her out; for the telegraphic process by which the Irish discover each other, whether they herd in St. Giles's or St. James's, is as curious and mysterious as everything else appertaining to that ill-fated people.

"How terribly broken poor Papa is, Nelly!"

"You may say dat, Miss; but sure it's a comfort to you dat God's let you pick up de fragments itself;" and poor Nelly passed the back of her hand hastily across her eyes, and then we relapsed into silence, for I believe we were both thinking the same thoughts; and, to use a homely simile, but one not less apposite on that account, as there are some tissues so old and tender, that they will not bear the needle, and therefore cannot be mended—so are there some feelings so hopelessly sensitive, that they will not bear the probe of words, and are therefore never uttered.

Never shall I forget the horrors of that first dinner, in that dirty, dingy lodging. My father ate little or nothing, although or perhaps because the table was groaning with food; nor was the dinner, beyond its terrible quantity, bad; for Tom Lutron, who always seemed to have the fear of famine before his eyes, would not be at the mercy of a lodging-house cuisine, ordered it daily from the Thatched House, in St. James's Street. But then the whole table looked so

piggy and disgusting, with all sorts of cruets, pickle-jars, and sauce-bottles; and although (considering Mr. Lutron's chiromantic mode of feeding) they would have been more than usually necessary, there were neither napkins nor finger-glasses, but each dinner-plate had an only child, in the shape of a cheese-plate, appended to it. At first, I wondered why; but as Tom Lutron cut his way through the alps of food before him, the mystery was elucidated by pyramids of potatoe-skins rising proudly upon the junior plate, something after the barbaric fashion of certain South Sea cannibals, who, after a plentiful meal, make trophies of the skins of their victims.

But the after-dinner was the really horrible part, for, not content with a multiplicity of wines, that might have sufficed Silenas, whisky-punch was the crowning abomination; and before ten o'clock, my poor father was carried by Maurice and Dowling to bed, in a state too painful and disgusting to witness; while the swine, instead of succumbing, became ruddy and rampant in his horrible companion, and with difficulty I made my escape upstairs, where, after being exhausted with the bitter, burning tears of despair, which, like the treacherous sprinkling of water on a fierce fire, instead of subduing, render it more intense, and unsolaced even by prayer, I passed the remainder of that miserable night in pouring out my heart to Grace, and telling her where our poor father was, under the seal of secrecy; for I knew he would never

forgive her or me, if my aunts discovered his retreat; but I added, that Monsieur de Maillepré had better lose no time in asking his consent, or I feared, even if his life continued, his intellect, or rather the wretched remnant he had left, could not hold out much longer; and, painful as the task was, she had better explain this to Monsieur de Maillepré.

The next morning, I cannot say that my resignation was increased, or my disgust diminished, I escaped Tom Lutron and the morning fog by breakfasting in my own room; but, by twelve, I took my father in his breakfast.

Morning never yet dawned on horrors, without making them more horrible; but when horrors happen to be duties, we should not shrink from them. It was some seconds before he sufficiently collected his ideas to remember me. Oh, it was very dreadful! I cried like a child—and so I ought, for I was his child; and, alas! he was my father!

If the dramas of real life could be written, the unsuspected tragedies of many breasts be laid bare, again would the heavens weep one overwhelming flood, and Nature's great universal heart would break in self-defence, beneath so dire a load. And this, thought I, as I gazed at my poor father's pale, insentient eyes, is the work of temper—the deadly fruits of unchecked ignorance!

My father's mother was a silly woman, who indulged him in everything, and corrected him in no-

thing; my aunt's mother a virago, who ill-used and neglected them; and before me lay the miserable results of both their sins; for in education, precepts, however good, are nothing—the mere wind, that bloweth where it listeth; but example is the soil upon whose goodness or badness depends the nature of the crops that shall spring from it. The D— himself, I have no doubt, quotes Scripture to the numerous younger branches of his family; and maxim-mongers —that is, writers upon education—have never been wanted, from Jean-Jacques and his sentimental, scoundrel school, down to the petrifying Utilitarian charlatans of own our day, who are for regenerating all the world but *one*, and that the one who most needs it, namely, *number one!*

Neither is it even the really practical philanthropists who in person visit prisons and penitentiaries, that are good trainers of youth, for in devoting their whole time to these national nurseries of crime, they must of necessity neglect their own nurseries. It may appear very narrow-minded in this age of progress, diffusion, and above all, of pretension, but I am convinced that could things be so managed, as to have a Squire Allworthy, a Vicar of Wakefield, a Lady Rachael Russell, and a Lady Bountiful, in every parish, we should *hear* less of progression and regeneration, and *perceive* them more; for the worst of most professed philanthropists is, that they seldom manage to unite those two charming young people—theory and practice,

on account, I suppose, of the course of true love never running smooth; and, alas! the *soi-disant* religious world seem equally at fault, for while thanking their God that they are not like other men, Christ—Heaven's cynosure of charity—is left out of their Christianity; and if you do not *talk* religion as much as they do, and make of your own righteousness a first-class engine to send others to perdition, no matter how rigidly you may put God's commandments into *action*, they will flatly tell you, with more piety than politeness, that you are not a Christian.

It is true, that each age avenges its predecessor, because each age is a little wiser at the expense of that predecessor; but this species of inevitable apotheosis is of little use to the martyr, however it may redound to the glory of the nation: and I very much doubt whether the manes of poor Caus (scoffed and lashed into madness at Bicêtre for trying to benefit his fellow-creatures), feel much appeased by all Europe's now receiving their letters and parcels, and being themselves conveyed from pole to pole in an incredibly short space of time, or even at his great successor, Stephenson's having been offered a knighthood!!!!!!!!

Alas! poor Solomon Caus! thy manes, instead of being appeased, may even be insane enough to think this the more be(k)nighted age of the two, notwithstanding its great progress (of steam).

But to return to my own individual little packet of hereditary misery and injustice, all in weeping bitterly

over the poor wreck before me, my heart knelt in thanks, and my soul was lifted up in gratitude to God, that he had allowed one star to shine upon my desert, and still its rays, though now so distant guided, by reminding me that even on earth's most desolate spot, there was a heaven above it, and a God within that heaven to watch over the most weary and way-worn; and I felt that painful and perplexing, as my position might be: my duty was to act, and not to let grief gain over me the ignoble victory of stupefaction: so at least *you* always acted, so you spoke, so you looked, dear uncle, and I felt that look the more, that perhaps I might never see it again. Oh! Châteaubriand is right, "il y a une vertu dans les regards d'un grand homme," that is of a good man, for there is no other greatness, none at least that Heaven endorses.

My father complained of his head, of his chest, in short, of being ill altogether; I persuaded him to keep his bed. I thought if I could only one day get him to remain away from that horrid dinner-table, it would be at least a reprieve, which to the doomed is something. Like a child, it was evident that he was pleased with the novelty of having me with him; and as soon as the fumes of the last night's orgy began to dissipate sufficiently to enable him to collect his thoughts, he began asking me about Grace: he had chosen the subject well, for that was one on which I could be eloquent. He expressed his fears that her mind had been quite poisoned against him. "Was

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the golden moment to strike the decisive blow; I told him about Monsieur de Maillepré's disinterested love for Grace, and read him that part of her letter: "To be sure," cried he, almost with enthusiasm, "she shall have my consent, and my blessing too, poor child!—poor children!" then groaned he, covering his face with his hands, "that it should *be all* I have left to give you."

"All! dear papa," cried I, throwing my arms round his neck, "and what more would you have? for if you give us that, depend upon it, God will give us the rest. Thank you, my own dear, good, kind father, then I may write to Grace to-day, and tell her?"

"Ay, my dear child," said my poor father, taking my face between his trembling hands, and looking with a painful sort of vacant intensity into my eyes; "tell her what you like, but don't tell her that I can never love her as I love you."

"No, I certainly shall not tell her that, because it will cease to be true the moment you know her."

"No, you are like your poor mother, Mirry, very like;" and he pressed his hands upon his eyes, as his head sank upon his pillow; but it would have been cruel, with the feeble expiring light his memory now shed, to let him go groping back into the irrecoverable past; so I said to rouse him,

"And I may write to dear Uncle Paulett too, may I not? Oh! you would so love Uncle Paulett, he *is* such a darling! so thorougly good."

"Yes, I believe he is a good man," sighed my father; "indeed, he must be good, for he has made a good girl of you."

"Oh! don't praise me too soon," rejoined I, trying to laugh through my tears, "till you see how I wear; but if there is any good in me, which I fear is very doubtful, depend upon it I owe it to Uncle Paulett; so recollect, dear *padre*, when I do wrong it's me, Mirry; but when I do right, 'c'est Marc Aurèle (*alias* George Paulett) qui parle!'"

"Et moi qui écoute, et qui admire," said my father, pressing my hand.

"Ah! Monsieur parle bien français?"

"No, Mirry, I do nothing well now."

"Well," said I, pouting, and shrugging my shoulders, as I used to do when a child, "if me's not well loved, me'll do back to school."

My father gave a slight shudder, and said, "his feet were very cold."

"I have not many accomplishments," said I, kneeling down by the bed-side to rub them, "but I flatter myself that I might be shampooer to the Shah of Persia."

My self-praises were borne out by my poor father's, who at the end of half an hour said, he had not felt so near heaven for long time. And then I offered to read to him.

"I fear, my child, you would not like to read the only books I now read, with the exception of a chapter

in the Bible on Sundays, which is 'The Sporting Magazine.'"

"I like to read anything you like," said I, as I took up that invaluable work off a table, where it lay with the last edition of "Joe Miller, with additions," "The Annual Register," and a curious old original edition of "Rabelais," with plates, that had belonged to Dean Swift, given to him by Lord Bolingbroke, with the autograph of the latter in the fly-leaf, announcing that fact. I read till about three o'clock, when Tom Lutron came blustering into the room in his charming frogged coat, saying, as he held out his tremendous hand to me:

"Ah! then, my dear Godfrey, don't you mane to get up to-day?"

"No," said I, in haste to answer for him, "he is not well, and I am going to dine with him."

"You are! well then, upon me word, Mr. and Miss Miriam Sedley, I think you trate your poor relations very shabbily; but divil a better luck those same poor relations have all the world over. I, that thought I was to be the envy of all Bond Street, and the Park, driving, by no manes, the ugliest gerril in London, though she is me cousin, and bearing, I've no doubt, a strong family likeness to me, though, perhaps, it's not exactly visible to the naked eye. Well, at all events, you must come into the next room, and have a look at Spanker and Blucher, for though I am a poor divil, I flatter meself there are not two prettier bits of blood in all London than my two bays."

"Bays! I should have thought they had been duns!"

"Oh! now, Godfrey, listen to the wickedness of the little divil, reminding me of me misfortunes. The fact is, me dear, me duns—and be d—d to them—have been driving me all me life, and I've felt the cruelty of the thing so much, that I'm too good a Christian not to do as I'd be done by; so that's the raison that I don't drive them."

To get rid of him the sooner I went into the sitting-room to look at his horses, which were truly, as he had said, a remarkably handsome pair of bays, but in a very shabby *mauvais-ton* curricle, with two equally shabby, dingy-looking grooms behind, who savoured far more of Tara's Halls than Tattersall's. I was curious to know, for my further guidance, how this extraordinary *ménage* was carried on; so after I had admired his horses, I put down the following plummet:

"Are these your lodgings, or papa's?"

"His, or mine, my dear, whichever you like; what's mine is his, and what's his is mine: mind you recollect that," said he, winking furiously; "but the fact is," added he, with a sigh, and assuming a look almost of feeling, "my governor—the old lord as they call him at Clanfuddle—behaved d—d ill to poor Godfrey, and not much better to me, for he chated him out of a very fine property, and me out of my birthright, by letting Lutron be born three years before me; and so, as we

are both beggars, we ought to help one another; besides, poor Godfrey always gave me the run of his cellar, as long as there was a bottle of claret in it, and, by Dad! he shall share Tom Lutron's purse, as long as there is a shilling in it, or a dun after it. I put in that latter clause, my dear, to make the lase of our friendship the longer, for the other would be but a mighty short tenure;" and he turned to the window, whistling "The Groves of Blarney," and knocking the silver top of the heavy hunting whip, by way of accompaniment, against his teeth.

Somehow or other, I could not help disliking the man less, for I began to look upon him as another wreck; for wherever there is a heart, there might have been a temple built upon it worthy of the Deity. Alas! alas! that for the few such that are raised upon the glorious site he gives to all, there should be so much rubbish only.

"But surely," said I, "you must find such horses as those very expensive?"

"Sacrets in every trade, my dear," said he, putting his forefinger to the side of his nose: "and Tom Lutron knows a thing or two: there's a certain house in St. James's Street, where I occasionally do a little business with a certain Mr. Dingly Vavasour, who plays high, but not deep; and as they say that Fortune favours fools—and small blame to her—for what could they do for themselves—I lave you to guess how matters stand; for I'd kick meself down stairs, if

I could be blackguard enough to boast of any lady's favours, especially one who has always bane so backward in giving any of our family encouragement, as that said Madame Fortune, bad luck to her! which is only wishing her a daughter, you know," added he, winking, as he kissed his hand, and left the room: "for it don't do to abuse those vindictive sort of divils, aven behind their back."

I stood a moment at the window, till he had driven off, and then returned to my post, thinking how many paths of pleasure had already opened to me in life; the philosophy of 'The Pig and Whistle,' the miracles of Fox Court, and the dissipation of driving about in such an equipage! with such a man as Tom Lutron! With these thoughts I rang for Nelly, and begged that my father and I might have our dinner on a tray at five, and then I returned to my post, where I managed so well, between teaching him *écarté*, which he did not know, and singing to him an infinite number of Béranger's songs, with which he was delighted, never having heard them before, and the Irish melodies which delighted him, because he had heard them, that eleven o'clock came without his having taken anything, but a little wine and water at dinner. But what pleased him most was, my singing that beautiful "Adelaida," of Beethoven's, without an accompaniment, which, by the bye, is rather difficult; but as he liked my voice I was determined the next day to get a pianoforte, and see if I could not get up a conspiracy against those

horrid sittings after dinner. On this night I sat with him till half-past twelve, and then I said:

"Dear Papa, do let me read prayers to you; I have all my life prayed for you, but oh! it would be such happiness at last to be able to pray *with* you."

"*Let* you, darling! what an idea! God knows no one needs prayers so much; do always pray for, and to, and with me, Mirry, as long as I am here, and when I am gone; though I forgot you on earth, I'll not do so in Heaven—if I ever get there!"

"You will get there, dear Father; for none pray to God in vain." I then knelt down and prayed beside him, oh! how fervently; and when I rose up and opened the Bible at random, as is my wont, what should I open upon but the twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which is on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine." For open the word of God where one will, it is astonishing how "the handwriting appears on the wall." I did not, of course, read out this chapter, but turned to that beautiful one, the thirty-fifth, which commences with—"The wilderness, and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

"'The wilderness and the solitary place' *is* made glad, darling," said my poor Father, kissing me when I had closed the book; "and though my poor desert of a heart does rejoice, thanks be to God, who has

sent me my own little rose here, yet it never can blossom again, because there are too many thorns."

"And don't you think, dear Father, that He who sends roses, can also take away thorns?" But he made no answer but a sigh, and I remained silent, for I never was a good hand at mocking misery of any sort with those trite and common-place exhortations to patience and resignation, which are so plentifully lavished upon those who suffer, by those who either do not, or have not suffered, as they naturally irritate instead of soothe: to enjoin resignation to the will of God, is another thing, and an imperative duty beside; but never try to persuade any poor wretch, that the burden they are groaning under, is not, in reality, so heavy as it is in their imagination; as to do so, is both cruel and false, for God would not afflict us if he did not mean that we should feel it. And even that most blessed of all anodynes—hope! requires to be administered with great skill and discrimination, to those whose wretchedness is chronic, and whose hearts have long been debarred from it; for being the natural food of the heart, the mind's digestion, like that of the body, becomes too weak after prolonged abstinence, to bear much of even that sustaining and salutary fallacy.

I sat by my poor father's bedside, till St. George's church struck two; he having been, thank heaven! for the last hour in a profound and quiet sleep, in which I left him and returned to my own room, where

I wrote to Grace, the glad and also the sad tidings I had to impart. To my uncle I wrote too, but having to do so through Clarence Paulett, I could not open my whole heart as I longed to do, to that dearest, kindest, best, and best loved being on earth.

CHAPTER VI.

For the next month I had to undergo what I can only define by the antithetical expression of a "stagnant struggle;" and of all struggles it is the hardest, for it is the catalepsy of the mind, acutely sensitive, and tumultuously busy in feeling, but hopeless, powerless, and incapable of all corporeal action; to be able to contend, is nearly to conquer; at all events it is to have an equal chance of victory; but to see the enemy armed *cap à pie*, with every weapon of destruction, while one has none of defence, beyond a fragile paper-shield with "Resignation" written on it; is to be like a wild beast in a den, and all lion, though one may be, the parasol-stick poking of the most inane *British female* that ever existed, suffices to worry one to death at these unequal odds, as I shall explain presently, first stating that I had so far succeeded in my arduous

enterprize, that by dint of music, reading, cards, backgammon, and all sorts of other "poor inventions," especially taking him long drives into the country, and getting him to walk a little when the weather would allow it. I so far weaned my poor father from his terrible and besetting sin, watching him by his bed-side like a child every night, till I had prayed, sang, or shampoo'd him to sleep, so that upon an average, he did not break from my bonds more than once in a week, and then the next day, he would be so contrite, humiliated, and submissive to me, that it was worse than all the rest, except the morning upon which my cousin (since such he was), informed me that he was quite ready to make me Mrs. Tom Lutron!

I thanked him for his obliging announcement (for offer I could not call it, as that is supposed to leave the offeree an option); but I told him that I was by no means nearly ready, as I should require such an immense and unprecedentedly magnificent *trousseau* to induce me to enter the ring (where women generally get the worst of it) that it would take at least fifty years to prepare it; and that then either he or I, or both, I was afraid would be too old. Out of evil, however, comes good, for, from that day, he never dined at home; so that I soon reformed not only the hours, but the dinners (and consequently the bills), having no more aldermanic banquets from "The Thatched House," as Nelly was a very good plain-cook; but in consideration of this "economy, and

retrenchment." I banished the cruet-stand, potatoe-steam plates, and introduced all sorts of innovations, and luxuries, in the form of water-glasses and quotidian clean napkins, and table-cloths *à discrétion*.

At the end of three weeks, my poor father was able to dine in the dining-room: and as the fumes of punch and cigars began to diminish from the sitting-room, our comfort, at least resignation to our dingy domicile, augmented. It was about a week after the establishment of this new order of things, that I was sitting one morning up in my own room, putting (don't be shocked, gentle, or even simple, reader, if there is such a thing now-a-days, putting new collars to my father's shirts. For you will understand, with all my advocacy of vulgar, that is, useful acquirements, and all my honest pride in possessing them, though I was neither born a cook, nor a house-maid, *je ne lave, ni ne raccommode non linge ou salum*: for Napoleon said one ought not do so, in which I quite agree with him. Well, for this reason, I was in my own room, when Nelly appeared, and informed me, that the "good ooman of the house," as her sacrilegious Irish tongue called her. "Misthress Dobbs, had called, and had a note from a lady, that she wished to give me."

"Cannot she give it to you, Nelly?"

"No, Mish; Dowling says she knows you herself, and wishes to see you."

"How tiresome! what is she like?"

"Dade, Miss, I don't know; Morrish let her in, and

she's in de dining room, though I didn't see her; but Morrish says, she's all feaders and colours, like a West Injee parrot."

"Well, I suppose I must see her," said I, not very graciously, for having had a Lourie described, I did not expect to see a houri, which was lucky; "let her be shown up to the drawing-room." I laid down my work, and descended to the drawing-room, where I was more surprised than pleased, at seeing a skinny, red-faced, and vulgarly over-dressed woman enter, who, after having made the *obligato* freezing-machine curtsey at the door, without, of course, a shadow of a smile upon her face,* stepped up to me in the most free (if not welcome) manner, saying:

"It's no use; I must ave a kiss."

"I think you must mistake me for some one else," said I, now falling myself into the orthodox two degrees below zero manner.

* Foreigners of every country, when they bow to, or salute you in whatever sphere of life they may be, smile graciously,or rather their whole countenance

> "Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon,
> Breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun!"

While the middle classes of English (the *haute volé* being well-mannered, if not well-bred, in all countries), are like the same lake that the north wind is upon, which stagnates to ice despite the sun. I have been told they mean this grim solemnity as a mark of respect; if so, I can only exclaim, as Charles Surface did, touching sentiment, which, it may be remembered, he consigned to the fate of an Amster—dam canal.

"I am so glad to see you! What a fine girl you are grown, to be sure! And ow is Sir George, and Mrs. Marley, and Miss Paulett?—though now I needn't mind saying it, but I never could bear them. And Grace—clever girl, isn't she? I always said she'd great abilities, but still, you were the one for my money,—and so the aides-de-camp said,—gentlemanly, and-some fellows, weren't they? So fond of the red-coats, I am!—I always was. Never thought I should ave married as I ave done. Ah, well! there's a fate in marriage, ain't there? And I must say, Dobbs don't begrudge me hanythink—would give me gold to heat hif I could heat it. Fact its—between you and I—he's proud of me, for I certainly did marry beneath me in marrying him. But lor! one can but be appy, can one?"

Mrs. Dobbs having at length stopped to take breath, I ventured to inquire where I had had the pleasure of seeing her last, that is, in what cabinet of gems, or curiosities, or bottle, glass, jug, basin, or other vase, before she had been thrown away upon Dobbs, whom she had so rapidly, but yet typographically, given me to understand was a perfect matrimonial dusthole, or any other similar emporium for unappreciated sundries.

"Lor! is it possible you don't recollect me? But no, to be sure, ow could you? You was quite a little thing then. Why, I am Miss—or, rayther, I should say I was—Miss Squiggins, that your Aunt Marley

beaved so shameful bad to: but I told the Countess of Catch-your-man, and many others of hequally igh rank—for, thank eaven! I ave many friends among the haristocracy—indeed, I may say all my connexion lies in that line—yes, I told them all about it. 'Dear me!' said the Countess, 'how hever could you stay, Miss Squiggins?' 'Why, your Ladyship his aware,' said I, one as one's feelings; it was not all petticoats in the ouse—Sir George was quite the gentleman, so were the aides-de-camps; and I was also so much attached to my pupils.' But, dear me! I'm quite forgetting all I came about. You must know, it was by the merest haccident, I knew you were ere, for the ouse is taken in the name of the Honourable Tom Lutron; but the hother morning, his butler came hasking for table-linen, and hall sorts of glasses and things, that had never been hasked for before, and he said it was because Miss Sedley would ave them. 'Miss Sedley!' said I. 'What Miss Sedley? Hany relation to Sir George Paulett?' 'His niece,' said he. So then I knew it was either you or Miss Grace; and I was so glad that I could not elp telling a lady who hoccupys another ouse of hours in Hupper Seymour Street—for Mr. Dobbs's property is in ouses," (I remarked that when it came to property the *fumier* rose in the scale, and was no longer plain Dobbs, the *mésalliance*, but Mr. Dobbs), "not that," continued his superior half, "we are obliged to let them, honly, as I said to Dobbs, 'Harthur,

it will be society-like* for me, and it is a pity to let them stand hempty,'—between you and I, my dear (though I did not tell Dobbs so), I thought by letting our ouses I should keep up my connexion with the haristocracy, for, as I before said, I never thought I

* I hope it will not be thought that I am plagiarizing from those charming volumes of inane rubbish, which a leading publisher pours out so remorselessly upon that much enduring animal, the British public; but when one has to describe vulgar people, one must, perforce, make use of the elegant language of the heroes and heroines of the aforesaid ultra-vulgar and ultra-trashy novels. Lever is not an Englishman, so I may fairly assert, without fear of contradition, that the author of "Vanity Fair" and "Pendennis," is the only English novelist deserving that name. There is no vulgar caricaturing in lieu of genuine humour—all in them is perfectly true to nature, and to life as it is, relieved by a tone of good society. He is, in short, the Charles Mathews of novelists—no small praise, since the Lyceum is the only theatre we have, where one sees perfect acting—because perfect nature, but gentleman-like nature. Heaven deliver us, and that soon, from the rantings, clippings, howlings, and hissings of the men, and the heavings, pantings, whinings, stagey squeaks, and vulgar flouncings of the "females" at all the other theatres, where even Shakspere's doublet is crammed with chaff into a scarecrow. It is much to be regretted, for his own sake, that Mr. Thackerey should be splashed by the literary mud of his present *entourage*; but as he appears to have the feelings of a gentleman, and neither blows a blacksmith's bellows of self-praise, charged with hyperborean German plagiarisms, or writes vulgar caricature of waiters, eating up schoolboys' dinners at inns, or all sorts of fine sentiments against cruelty and injustice, the better to toady and herd with all that is most loathsome in moral depravity. It is to be hoped he will soon emancipate himself from a certain disgraceful clique.

should marry as I ave done. Oh, no! very different from that! but I do say, and shall always think, that propinquity does for young women as a shower of rain does for a new bonnet." And while Mrs. Dobbs perorated this profound truth with a sigh, I, who found that, if *l'appétit vient en mangeant* curiosity certainly grows in listening, ventured to ask her, where she had met with Mr. Dobbs.

"Oh, lor! it was to be, I suppose; for he was my brother's partner,—"Squiggins and Dobbs," the great atters (hatters), corner of Vigo Lane."

This was a great relief to my mind, for, notwithstanding the sensitive exaltation of Mrs. Dobbs's ideas concerning the rank of the man who might have worthily aspired to the honour of inducing her to lay aside the aristocratic name of Squiggins, yet I, as an impartial and disinterested umpire, did not fail to perceive that if Dobbs was worthy of being partner to a he-Squiggins, *cœteris paribus* he could not be quite unworthy of being partner, even for life, to a she-Squiggins. Besides, *was he not a hatter still!* and consequently at the very top of his pro-fession, as his wife would have called his trade? Had he been a hosier or a shoe-maker, then, indeed, she might have put her foot in it, and thought she had descended too low.

"Well," said I, having solved this problem to my own satisfaction; "and the lady in your other house that you were going to tell me about?"

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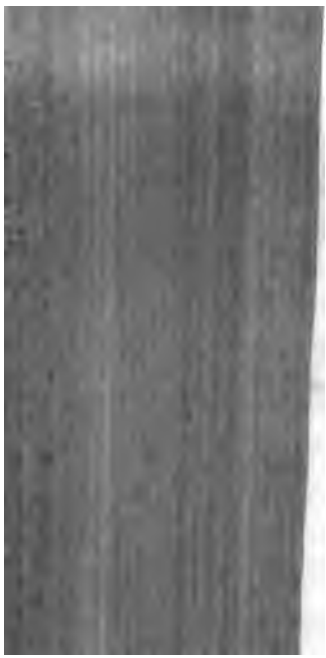
But I determined, when he went out to drive at three, to go to her, for I knew he would wait in the carriage; and to this effect I now wrote Mrs. Vavasour back word; and having sealed my note, I confided it to Mrs. Dobbs, after I had rung for some wine and water and sandwiches for that lady, who when I asked her whether she would take sherry in water, or claret in water, said she preferred claret, cold as the day was, because it reminded her of the aristocracy!—Oh, that aristocracy! what struggles, sextile imitations and sufferings it has entailed upon the middle classes of this country; who nearly all, from attempting to be above what they are, are infinitely below what they ought to be.

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Dobbs, looking at her watch, "it wants a quarter to two! I must make haste back, or Dobbs will be so angry! for he says, a young married *female* ought not to be out late alone."

I could not help thinking, that it did not much matter how young the marriage was, when the female was not equally so, and, moreover, as unmistakeably ugly as Mrs. Dobbs; but I have remarked, that among a certain class of *British females*, next to the *very different station they ought to be in.* Their *idée fixe* seems to be the fatal passions they have inspired, are inspiring, and will inspire; which, if they have the slightest foundation for this notion, only proves what sensible beings British males must be, not to be led



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I, not a little disgusted at the eternal praises this class of English people bestow upon themselves, and the obligation they make it to transfer the money from your pocket to theirs; and yet, with all their talents for screwing and grasping, they are terrible fools for their pains, because they so sicken one of acting liberally towards them.

"Oh! of course," replied she in answer to my query. "But what I want you to give me, Mrs. Dobbs, is a sofa, or a *chaise-longue* for Papa's room."

"Oh! I really could not, or—that is, I could; but it would be a guinea a month. Mr. Dobbs as ad so many losses this year we really cannot afford it."

Now I might have had great compassion for Mr. Dobbs's pecuniary losses which prevented his giving anything to make his house habitable, had not his wife insisted all along upon their being so very well off as not to require to let their house at all, but merely doing it from an overflow of philanthropic hospitality "to accommodate their friends;" but not being quite such a fool as perhaps I may appear, I merely said:

"Thank you, Mrs. Dobbs, at that rate I prefer hiring a new one, which I enquired the other day about at Gillows, and heard it would be ten shillings a month."

This was to be a day of unexpected arrivals, for scarcely had Mrs. Dobbs taken her departure, before a carriage drove up to the door, and in a few minutes

Maurice brought in a letter and a card, saying, that the gentleman had asked for my father and for me, and waited to know if we could receive him. The letter was from Grace, and on the card was—

"LE COMTE EUGENE DE MAILLEPRÉ,

"SECRETAIRE DE LA LEGATION,

"DE FRANCE."

My heart beat violently—partly with emotion and partly with shame; thank heaven! the smell of cigars and their accompaniments had been got out of the room, and superseded by a few plants, flowers, and books which always unvulgarize a room to a certain extent. Ah! had it been only the room—but it was my poor father; oh, terrible! most terrible of all feelings—most painful and difficult of all positions, when in any relationship of life, the order of nature is reversed; and that which should be our pride and support is our burden and our shame. Oh! but he loved Grace, and surely the great shadow of that deep and delicate love which she had so often described to me would fall in pity on *her* father.

"Beg of this gentleman to walk up," I said at length in a very faint voice—and it was a reprieve to think that my first interview with my future brother-in-law, considering all the painful circumstances under which it took place, would at least be alone; besides,

Grace had more than once mentioned his perfect manners, and with thorough-bred people, even the most *gauche*, cannot long be embarrassed. Soon the door again opened, and a very handsome high-bred looking man entered.

"Ah!" said he, advancing with a mixture of grace, cordiality, and respect that was irresistible, as he carried my proffered hand to his lips. "Mademoiselle Miriam Sedley, *il n'y a pas à s'y méprendre!* and I have so much to thank her for," added he (in such good English as to be a perfect miracle in a French mouth at that time), "that I scarcely know where to begin; but this I know, my gratitude will never end."

"*Excusez, Monsieur,*" said I, smiling, as we sat down; "but you acknowledge more than your share of the debt, for any exertions I may have made to propitiate my father, was chiefly on my sister's account."

"Now, Mademoiselle, you have made me doubly happy, therefore am I doubly grateful, and you go on multiplying my obligations, for you have set my mind at ease as to the only fault I feared your sister possessed."

"Fault! what fault? Every one has faults, they say; but really, setting all partiality aside, I should be puzzled to say what was Grace's fault."

"So should I now," said Monsieur de Maillepré; "but till to-day, as I before said, I had feared that she was guilty of one, and a very unpardonable one, too."

"You quite raise my curiosity," rejoined I; "but in my exculpation of Grace from any flagrant defects, pray don't suppose that I am calumniating her into that most odious of all things, "a faultless monster!" But do tell me, what the fault was that you thought she was guilty of?"

"Exaggeration in her manner of describing her sister; but I see I was mistaken, and am only too happy to have so fair an occasion of recanting my heresy and scepticism, and from my heart I do so," said he, pressing his hands to it, and bowing over them.

"Ah!" said I, laughing, "Monsieur n'est pas diplomat pour rien; je crains qu'il est tant-soit-peu persifleur!"

"En politique, peut-être? For truth has nothing to do with politics; but at all events," added he, walking over to a looking-glass, and touching it with his cane, "I never assert anything without being able to prove it; and here is one whose testimony you must believe, as it tells nothing but truths on the face of it!"

My face was now very red, not from Monsieur de Maillepré's compliments — for, exaggerated as they were, they were delicately administered—but I thought the time was come, when I must offer to go for my father.

"If you will excuse me a moment," said I, with some hesitation, "I will go and let papa know you are here; I am sure he will be delighted to see you; but

—but—that is, I mean—I suppose Grace has told you how terribly shattered his health is, and—"

"Yes, yes," said he, taking both my hands, and pressing them kindly in his, "she has told me all about it; and don't let him disturb himself on my account, pray; for unfortunately," added he with a sigh, "I had an uncle who fell a martyr to that same horrible custom of the last age, which is happily going out in this; and you know we must be very careful of our poor father in his present state."

I felt the noble delicate kindness and tact of what he said, and his charming manner of saying it, so intensely, that I was no longer mistress of myself, and burst into tears, for it not only reminded me of my dear uncle's generous way of nullifying the obligation of all he conferred, by throwing himself into partnership in the benefits that accrued from it, but it was so different from the coarse probing and eternal misconstruction my poor feelings had been subjected to for the last three years, that the reaction was too much for me.

"How kind, how generous you are," said I, as soon as I could speak; "oh! thank you, a thousand times."

"Mais non," rejoined he gaily, "vous savez que marchand d'oignons s'y connait en ciboules! and my poor uncle* has made me *au fait* to our present posi-

* I afterwards discovered that M. de Maillepré had had, such an uncle, but had never seen him.

tion. While you are gone, I'll take a book; so you see, *chère petite belle sœur*, I lose no time in installing myself in my new home."

"Oh! don't call this place home," said I.

"But, yes—every place is home, where one's heart is; and I shall always love this little room, from the kind manner you received me in it. Indeed, I am not sure," continued he, laughing, "that I shall not come and pass our *lune de miel* here. How do you call that in English?"

"Honeymoon."

"Ah! honeymoon—la même chose."

"Pas toujours, à ce qu'on dit," said I.

"Now, don't think me a presuming, impertinent fellow," said Monsieur de Maillepré, "but if you will allow me to call you Miriam, and you will, *tout bonnement*, call me Eugène, I think I shall appear less formidable to poor papa, if he will see me."

"With pleasure, my dear, good Eugène," said I, again holding out my hand to him.

"Well, now, my dear Miriam, you shall go and tell our father that his son wishes to have the honour of seeing him. What have we here? 'Childe Harold.' Ah! je suis fou! de Lord Byron—that is, as far as I understand his sublime poetry; at all events, I think I understand him better than *ses bêtes de compatriotes*. We have a poet, of whom France will one day have cause to be as proud as England will be of Byron—

our young Lamartine; and that fine line of his always reminds me of, and explains to me Lord Byron:

"L'homme est un dieu tombé, qui se souvient des cieux."

"Et ce souvenir lui ramenera là," said I, as I left the room.

It detained me some little time to prepare my father for Monsieur de Maillepré's arrival, for I did not like to announce it to him abruptly, for fear of flurrying him; and then there was a still further delay, to tell him what a charming person the former was, so as, if possible, to make him feel at his ease beforehand; but this was the most difficult task of the two, for the vague, in evil, is always more terrible than the positive; and when the body is totally enfeebled and prostrated, our own feelings are with difficulty tangible or palpable to our intelligence, through the moral fog that exhales from this sort of physical stagnation.

Like an infant, my poor father submitted to every change I chose to make in his toilet; and after I had arranged his hair, the first *émeute* I got up was with the horribly unbecoming bale of white muslin he used to wear round his neck, in guise of cravat; and the blue coat, with gilt, embossed buttons, purporting to be those of the Clanfuddle Hunt, and bearing a fox's head, surmounted by a crown; which, coming from so seditious a country as Ireland, had a most satirical

and treasonable appearance; and, although the cravat was tied, and the coat was cut on the exact model of those of "the first gentleman of the age," (so called, no doubt, from his manly and honourable behaviour to his wife), I had the one exchanged for a black silk handkerchief, and the other for a plain frock-coat, and though the wearer still appeared a wreck, it was at least the wreck of a gentleman.

"Ah! well—but isn't it strange that I should give what I haven't got, what I never had?" said my father, vacantly, and pausing as we were half-way to the door.

"Yes, dear Papa—you have got Grace's duty and affection for yourself, and her happiness in your keeping too; and it is only the latter we want you to entrust to Monsieur de Maillepré."

"No, no—I'm afraid it's not right," said he, pulling his under-lip, as his eyes wandered with painful vacuity over the bare and smoke-dried branches of a pear-tree, that rose like a trophy of desolation from out the centre of the gravel pocket-handkerchief, called the garden, in front of the bed-room windows; "no—it can't be—for even Tom says you should never agree to anything, without seeing it. That's the way my uncle cheated me, cheated you and Grace, Mirry, otherwise you would have been heiresses. Ha! ha! they laugh at Irish heiresses here."

"Yes, dear father, because that in order to be an

Irish heiress, it is necessary that your property should belong to some one else; and the English are the most matter-of-fact people under the sun—all descendants of St. Thomas, who never believe what they don't see, or even what they do see as plain as noon-day, if the seeing it would in the remotest degree compromise their interests, real or imaginary; but in giving Grace to Monsieur de Maillepré, you will make her much happier, and me too, than if Lord Lutron had allowed us to remain heiresses, even in the *bonâ-fide* English sense of the term."

"Shall I?" said my father, quickening his pace towards the door; "then let me do it directly while I think of it."

As soon as we opened the door leading into the passage, previous to going into the drawing-room, I perceived that my poor father was seized with another panic; but as I recollected how completely Monsieur de Maillepré had put me at my ease, I had implicit faith in his good feeling, and *savoir vivre* for achieving what I, singly, never could have done, and so without further delay opened the door; in a moment, Monsieur de Maillepré came forward; nothing could exceed the tenderness, yet deference, of his manner, as he held out his hand to my father, and then said:

"I hope, my dear Sir, Miriam has expressed to you a little of the gratitude I so deeply feel for the kind manner in which you have not only received, but

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"N'est ce pas?" cried my fa
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no reminding him of its loss by
his health; in short, no effort or

but that deep under current of kindness and tact, which always produces a smooth, flowing, and agreeable surface, over which all things, from the smallest to the greatest, glide pleasantly. We were still talking, turf and training (I say we, because, thanks to my recent course of reading in the "Sporting Magazine," I was as well crammed as a newly-fledged patriot with a maiden speech, and, therefore, was duly qualified to take part in this edifying conversation; and I found it necessary to do so, because charmed as my poor father evidently was with his future *genre*, yet the force of habit made him cling to me as his bottle-holder); and I had just slid in a most learned quotation from Tom Chiffney, touching the merits and demerits of the favourite, when there came one of those atrocious old-fashioned, but now, thank heaven! exploded, thundering footmen's knocks, that almost make one rebound with their galvanic force up to the ceiling. I ran to the head of the stairs to say "not at home," and then through the window I perceived the same identical "glass coach" which had conveyed Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck on a former occasion to "Concave House," and his tawny, saturnine, leathern visage, relieved by the florid capsicum face, and above all, nose of Lady Laura O'Shindy! Oh, how I rejoiced upon having put Maurice on the preventive service; but as I before remarked, one should never rejoice at anything in this world, except the prospect of getting out of it, for presently after Mr. Pinch-

beck's *recitativo* of "Do you see me now?" I heard Lady Laura's falsetto-squeak, while she beat time with that *bâton* of a finger of hers. "Oh, but you must take my card up to Miss Sedley, for I'm just returned from Pawis (Anglice, Paris), and I'm sure she'll see me!" for one of the most aggravated and hopeless symptoms of Lady Laura's vulgar freedom was, that she always laboured under the delusion that she was welcome everywhere; but then, to be sure, it must be pleaded in extenuation, that if she had waited till she was, she would never have gone any where; or had she also stayed till her society was sought, she must have led a life of total seclusion. Maurice soon arrived with her subpœna, for it was certainly nothing less. "Dear! how very annoying," said I, quite out of humour, "that one's house, at least, one's dingy lodging, can not be called one's own, but must be forcibly entered in the name of the autocrat of English society, ennui!"

"Who is it, my dear?" asked my father.

"Lady Laura O'Shindy, she said at——that she knew you intimately at Clanfuddle, for she is always raking up acquaintances from the ashes of time, and if she cannot manage it in any other way, gives one the grilled bones of one's grandfathers and grandmothers; but is it true, that you used to walk in the fields with her papa, and once saved her life from a mad bull?"

"Oh, ah! I do remember once seeing her home from Castle Sedley across the fields to Clanfuddle, but, my

dear, the bull was not mad at all, but as quiet and well-behaved a bull as could possibly be, till he saw Lady Laura's nose, and I suppose mistook it for a red hot poker, which of course set him bellowing and furiously plunging all over the field."

Here Monsieur de Maillepré took her card out of my hand, and having read it, he pressed his eyelids tightly with his fingers, and tossing back his head, exclaimed with a sort of muscular convulsion :

"Ah, cette cauchemar de femme! elle est laide comme une grimace!"

"What do you know her too?" laughed I.

"Yes, for my sins, I met her one morning in David's *atelier*, but was amply compensated by the *mauvaise plaisanterie*, he was playing off upon her. She is, as I suppose I need not tell you, horribly vain, and as from her ridiculous dress and appearance, everybody stares at her, she actually fancies herself a beauty. Hearing that David was about to paint an historical picture of the Mother of the Grachii, for the next year's exposition, Lady Laura never ceased teazing her unhappy husband to get David to let her sit, or rather stand, for the model of Cornelia, saying, that she was the very thing for a Roman matron, or mahtron, as she calls it, and actually wanting modestly to substitute her *own books!* for the two boys to illustrate the speech of 'These are my Jewels,' till he had seen her, David accepted the offer with much gratitude, but no sooner had he done so, than he told her there was one condition he always imposed upon his models, which was

that they never were to see the picture till it appeared at the Louvre. She consented, *et que fait ce diable de David!* but paint a startling picture of the Witch of Endor raising the shade of Samuel before Saul, the witch being a flagrant likeness of Lady Laura, even to that skinny finger of hers."

"Charming!" laughed I, "David is a second Daniel, have you any objection to her coming up, dear Papa?"

"Very great, my dear; but I suppose she must come up, as she *will* do so."

Upon this, I went to the door, and told Maurice, who was still waiting outside to shew her up; and a few minutes after, Lady Laura, all feathers and faintings, that is, little die away *minauderies*, sailed into the room, with her undulating Venus rising from the sea air, as if already overpowered with a sense of her own loveliness, and deeply commiserating those who were also about to be crushed beneath the earthquake of her charms, holding in her hand a present from Pinchbeck—a most appropriate one, truly! As it was neither more, nor less, than Jean Paul's "Das Lob der Dummheit," or, "Eulogy of Stupidity!"

"Ah, how—do—you—do?" said she, diffusing the sentence into the one lengthened cadence of a sigh, as like a telegraph she advanced one hand to me, and one to my father, and then making a sort of patronizing nod to Monsieur de Maillepré, she informed him, as she seated herself on the sofa beside my father, that the latter had been an old *adorateur* of hers, and

appealed to him to corroborate the incredible fact, but he did not seem to be able to recollect ever having burdened his soul with such a horrid Egyptian monster species of idolatry. Lady Laura after this, had time to remark, that I (like my father's passion for her), had grown out of all recollection; and asked me if I remembered the pleasant parties she used to give at ———; I said, that I remembered the parties perfectly, indeed that I should never forget them. She then said, bobbing her head like a Chinese Joss, and dancing her card-case upon her knee, in lieu of a chime of joy bells in celebration of her defeat in that quarter, which, like Napoleon, she determined to turn into a victory:

"You have heard, I suppose, that I succeeded in at last bringing about a match between Captain Dapperwit and Miss Leah Abraham; they are as happy as possible, only I must say, they don't express their gratitude to me quite as often, and as warmly, as I think they ought, and as I like to see young people do."

She then turned to my father, addressing herself exclusively to him on the score of her brother, Lord Clanfuddle's, and Captain O'Shindy's crimes and misdemeanours in Paris, in never taking her anywhere, if they could help it. While I had to endure Pinchbeck's reproaches, for not having kept my appointment with him at Professor Von Echokant's lecture upon the regeneration of the human race on the banks of

the Gulgoose river, and that by my culpable neglect, I had perhaps lost the only opportunity I should ever have of hearing that eighth wonder of the world. I said I would endeavour to bear the misfortune with Christian resignation, and only hoped Heaven might be pleased to set it down to my account in lieu of all others.

Having presented him to Monsieur de Maillepré, whom I saw was hugely amused with this magnificent specimen of the ourang-outang tribe, Pinchbeck said with more veracity than good-breeding (query, are they always compatible?) in an execreable gibberish, which some Cork pedagogue had palmed off upon his too confiding ears for French:

"Oh! vous êtes du corpse diplomatic, je la appel le corpse Diabolic."

"Que voulez vous, Monsieur?" said Monsieur de Maillepré, with a shrug, "vaut autant avoir le Diable au corps pour la politique, qu'avoir un Diable de corps Philosophique, comme cela se voit quelque fois."

I was bursting with laughter, but Pinchbeck, only said, taking up "Childe Harold," and bringing his nose nearly to bear upon the page, "Ah! now, he's getting too far across the Channel for me; I have not French enough to follow him." After which "polite" aside, he began mumbling and murdering the magnificent poetry he held in his hand, bringing in, "do you see me now?" with a Cork whine in alto at the end of every stanza. This really was too much for mortal gravity, especially as Monsieur de Maillepré was

busy in making a sketch of him on the back of a letter. I turned to him, and said in Italian *à propos* of this "do you see me now?" refrain to "Childe Harold."

"Do you remember the story of Dante following the ass-driver at Fiezole, who was singing stanzas from the 'Divina Comédia,' adding, however, at the end of each that eternal *arri-là* of Italian muleteers, till poor Dante could stand it no longer, and going up to him, and collaring him, said *Corpo di Bacho!* *I* never put that infernal *arri-la* to my verses.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Monsieur de Maillepré, "I should rather use that old ape there, who is profaning 'Childe Harold,' as Dante used the blacksmith at Siena, whom he heard singing in the most atrocious voice, and accent, his own canzones over the anvil when the poet rushed into the forge, and broke all the poor wretch's tools to pieces, saying, 'I'll teach you how to mutilate my poetry; *there!* how do you like having *your* property destroyed?' and upon this illustrious precedent I, should like to act, and break every bone in your friend, the ape's, ugly skin."

"Wait at least," replied I, laughing, "till Lady Laura gets one of Bone's enamels of the matchless original."

Perceiving that the latter, according to her old habit, was taking root, I turned to her, saying:

"I am sorry to say, Lady Laura, that papa and I have an appointment at three; and so we must

forego the pleasure of your society this morning, but have no doubt you will compensate for it some oth time."

"Oh, now, that's most unfortunate," said Lad Laura; "for I had intended to take you with me Hans Walden, the Swedish Sculptor, who is modellir a statuette of me, that Mr. Pinchbeck wants to ta out to the Gullgoose river with him."

I stared; for Lady Laura was not only a comple bag of bones, considerably awry, but had a hump th Punch might have mistaken for his own. But as was a habit with her, whenever she drew upon othe for a compliment, and their candour refused to hono the draft, to immediately pay it to herself in "bank folly" notes. She now said, rising, and with a sel satisfied toss of the head, giving a rearward, yet ci cular glance at her whole figure:

"For there are few young girls even of your ag Miriam, who possess such a *charenure!* (*tournure*) mine!"

"Yes, thank heaven! Madame," cried Monsieur Maillepré, with unfeigned gratitude, "for what wou become of our unfortunate sex if there were?"

"Oh! I do like the French, they are *so* polite said Lady Laura, bolting this tough truth as a comp ment; "it reminds me of a poor young man in Par who used to rush out of every room I came into, sayi 'it was too much for his feelings, as I was unfort nately married!' Poor Mussew de Codille, they us

to call him Lady Laura O'Shindy's kite, because they said he always flew before me."

"And because, Madame," said Monsieur de Maillepré, with a keen, satirical wit that was of course lost upon this ridiculous woman, but which I enjoyed to the uttermost, "Codille, comme au jeu de l'hombre, gagnait sans avoir fait jouer."

"Ha! ha! ha! *omber*, that's a shadow, in French, isn't it?" said Lady Laura, appealing to me; "oh! yes, I understand, Mussew de Malpray means that he fled to avoid becoming my shadow, very prettily said. I do like compliments, I confess; and they never can be too florid to please me. Now I think that is the great fault of Englishmen, they don't know how to pay compliments; but the Irish and the French are always paying me compliments, and then they laugh so pleasantly after them, that it puts every one in spirits."

"Where, *ma foi*, you ought to have been put some fifty years ago," *sotto voce'd* Monsieur de Maillepré, aside.

At length we got this hyperborean personage, with her full complement of dullness, in the shape of her companion Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck, out of the house; not, however, without a threat of many future visits, "now that she had found us out," which she it seems had done, through Dermot; for which I transmitted him that very evening, *viâ* his mother, a sound reprimand, knowing that it would lose nothing by the channel through which I sent it. When

Paris. I said I shoul
not the courage to
father, less alive to t
I was, pressed him t
was disengaged.

"Thank you, my
he; "but unfortuna
ten in the evening;
enough of me, I pre

I fully appreciate
let him know that I
I shook hands with h

"When Grace com
dinners may be that

"*Bon!*" said he,
like a pious, well bre
you think there ought
You see," added he,
ros bif and *plombe* bu

CHAPTER IX.

When we got to Upper Seymour Street my father remained in the carriage while I went up; I felt no shyness or awkwardness in doing so, for as I have before said, it is only vulgar and under-bred persons who have the unenviable power of making one feel either the one or the other, and Mrs. Vavasour's note had already done the work of time, and made me feel that she and I were old friends; besides, had she not been my Uncle Paulett's first love? and what he had loved, and what had loved him, must surely be loveable. After all, the heart is the only true logician—all its presentiments are correct solutions, to which experience writes *probatum est.* Mrs. Vavasour was just the age at which Diane de Poictiers had made captive the heart of Henry the Second of France, forty-two; and if *la*

belle Diane was only half as handsome as Mrs. Vavasour was then, all I can say is, that Henry the Second had more sense than most men in love are troubled with. She was very like what I remembered her son, only with that almost holy expression which a deep-rooted sorrow imparts to beautiful features—that is, when the conflict has ceased, and memory, that moonlight of the mind, has shed over the ruins of the heart that pale mystic light which touches them into beauty by a halo from above.

She folded me in her arms, and then said, standing at a little distance from me:

"And so this is little red boots, of whom I have heard so much from Sir George and from Philip. I assure you he returned from —— quite *épris*, I don't know whether it was with the dancing or the *danseuse*, but both I suspect."

"Not very likely," said I, laughing, "for Fiametta was his love."

"Oh, haven't you heard of the split in that quarter? Lady Paulett last year in Paris asked him, *comme cela se pratique chez les mamans anglaises*, whether he was quite sure of having Marmiondale, and of being able to make a good settlement upon Fia; whereat, Philip got into one of his terrible white rages, and said he knew nothing about Marmiondale, but that he was quite sure of not being able to settle anything upon Miss Paulett, inasmuch as that no earthly power would induce him to marry her. 'Oh, very well,' said Lady

Paulett, I'm very glad of it, for now I hope Fia will hear reason, and accept Lord Mountflummery.' "

"Lord Mountflummery!" cried I, "that wretch of a man!"

"Why, what do you know about him, dear?" said Mrs. Vavasour.

I then gave her the little episode about Miss Sharpe's sister, and the bridal party in the Temple Church.

"Ah! my dear child," replied Mrs. Vavasour, shaking her head, with a melancholy smile, "that, I fear, is only a very short scene in the drama of vice, which men, being the lord chamberlains of their own morality, or rather immorality, have in all times licensed themselves to act; and as long as women, as a body, are so degraded, so selfish, and so mean, as to uphold, not only by their toleration, but by their co-operation, the oppressors and outragers of their sex, and to broach that coarse, indelicate, and purely English tenet, that 'a reformed rake makes the best husband!' you cannot be surprised that, like the game of the dagger and the ring, in French and German fairs, where men get upon a hobby in a giddy-round, and run full tilt with a dagger through a ring, that has some coveted prize behind it, which can only be pierced and carried off through the ring, marriage with us should be on a similar footing, and hearts be pierced and broken *à discrétion*, to afford our lords and masters a little momentary convenience, or excitement; for, like the

prizes of the round-about, the hearts are generally flung away as soon as obtained, all their attraction consisting in their pursuit."

"But surely," said I, "Fiametta cannot know how shamefully that Lord Mountflummery behaved to that poor Miss Sharpe, who, if not his equal in position, at all events has a heart to break, and a character to lose."

"Why, yes, she is perfectly aware of it, since they used to laugh over it, I understand, together; and so would half the Misses in England, for they are brought up to sophisticate the commandments of God in a sort of double crucible: one side for female morals, rigid and immutable, the other for male, with a corrosive sublimate of custom and human law, which neutralizes men's worst vices. I only wonder the same wisdom and justice has not long ago decided that it was no crime for men to commit murder; but when committed by them, was merely to be called, 'a little affair of temper;' the gibbet and the block, of course, remaining in full force to punish female assassins; and, indeed, if they had, they could hardly have achieved a more flagrant state of social immorality than their present one-sided code, as far as it goes, has accomplished. However, so it will be till the time comes for redress. The masters, of course, must be served before the slaves; the world will now go on progressing by great strides; every ten years some great abuse, under whose baneful effects men groan, will be, by their

united resistance, shaken off; but it will be much longer before the world, with regard to women, stamps the dust of ages from its sandals, their emancipation, not indeed from the sphere for which God has ordained them—a holy, if in this world a seemingly inferior one, —but from the bitter injustice and foul tyranny of men, as it will be the great battle of Armageddon, the final struggle of society, in short, the commencement of the real Christian era, which for eighteen hundred and fifty years the world has fought for, bled for, died for, in short, done anything and everything but lived for, according to the true spirit of Christianity; but so it was to be. Much rubbish must be dug out before a foundation for a building can be made; many stones hewn, many beams planed and severed, much clay kneaded and hardened by fire into bricks, many opposites dove-tailed into unity, and cemented by labour, before a goodly edifice can be raised, and many intellects set to work separately on its different portions, all tending to one final purpose, before the heterogeneous materials are united in a great and magnificent whole; in short, I do believe, that as the physical world was made out of chaos, so must the moral world be willed out of the same, but by a longer process."

"I think so too, dear Mrs. Vavasour; but though the *fiat lux* has not yet been pronounced on the latter, still, even in this moral twilight, there are certain things that the glow-worm conscience must even by its tiniest light point out to us as being wrong; and

nothing could induce me to marry such a man as Lord Mountflummery, knowing, as Fiametta does, his heartless treatment of another woman."

"Ah! that is because you are a straight-minded, honest-hearted, independent girl, and don't perhaps think, like most English young ladies, that to be married, no matter to what, or to whom, is the one thing necessary in this world."

"Then I suppose," said I, "that your son don't go to the Pauletts' any longer?"

"On the contrary," rejoined Mrs. Vavasour, "for there is no end to the manœuvring that goes on in society. Lady Paulett especially begged of him to come there, at least when she had *réunions*, that the world might not suppose there ever had been anything between Fiametta and him: 'And as there never has been,' said Philip, with one of his haughty curls of the lip, 'I shall certainly accept your invitation, whenever you have anything worth coming to.' And now tell me, Miriam, all about yourself, and how you came to leave that school, and where your sister is: in short, everything—at least everything that you choose to tell me."

"Oh, dear Mrs. Vavasour! then that will be everything;" and, as briefly as I could, I then told her of my father's coming for me, the terrible wreck that he now was, and Grace's engagement to Monsieur de Maillepré, and how much I liked him, not, however, omitting my qualms at his coming to that horrid place

in Maddox Street. "But is it not," concluded I, "altogether a painful, a perplexing, and, above all, a false position?"

"It is indeed," said she, taking my hand in the kindest manner, as she put her handkerchief to her eyes. "But you speak to one who can feel for you, my dear child, from being in a still more false and cruel position; for I am waiting in all the torments of the most anxious suspense, not knowing when my own son will return from abroad; and when he does, ignorant whether he will condescend to come and stay with his poor mother, for fear of offending his father's rich brother, who may, or may not, according to whichever point his unprincipled caprice veers towards the last, make him his heir; but, as our fates seem different, yet similar, inasmuch as that for both, the ordinary course of things has been turned aside, we must only try and help one another. These rooms are certainly not very splendid, still they are tolerably large, and airy, and, according to your description of those in Maddox Street, must be an improvement on them."

"Oh!" interrupted I, "by comparison, they are those of a palace; besides, *you* are in them, and that at once gives them a look of home and refinement."

"I'm afraid you are a little flatterer, Miriam: but if these rooms are really in themselves more agreeable, you must persuade your father and Monsieur de Maillepré to come here of an evening, instead of staying there; and besides, it will be a more effectual

way of keeping your poor father out of temptation. I'll go down to the carriage-door with you when you go, and ask him."

"Oh! thank you a thousand times, dear, kind Mrs. Vavasour!—how very good of you!"

"How very kind to myself. But I have one piece of good news for you, Miriam, which is, that your Uncle Paulett is expected back in a month."

"Then you have heard from him?"

"No," said she, colouring slightly; "but I go down every morning to see something or other done, or got ready in his house. You know it is close by, in Upper Berkeley Street."

"Oh! why were you not there entirely?" exclaimed I, giving utterance to my wishes before reflection had time to check me.

"Because," said she, with a sort of calm sadness, "my mother chose me to marry Mr. Vavasour on account of his reputed wealth; and you ought to know, my dear child, by this time, unfortunately for yourself, that our fates are more often made for us, than by us."

"But I don't mean at first," said I, "but when you became a widow."

"How do you know," said she, smiling, and trying to parry my question, "that he gave me the opportunity?"

"Oh! I'm sure he must have done so."

"Well, if you must know," and the tears filled her

eyes as she spoke, "I did not like to give him a wreck, in exchange for the noblest and truest heart that ever beat in a human bosom," and she then gave me a few of the details of her wedded martyrdom, which was, indeed, a terrible history, so terrible, that I exclaimed:

"And this! in a nominally Christian country? Was there then no one of sufficient moral courage and moral rectitude, to defend you against such a dastardly villain, though he was called your husband?"

"Ah! my dear child, you little know the world in this nominally Christian country, if you think that even individually, still less collectively, it would ever take the part of the weak against the strong, especially when the strong bears the name of husband, and the weak of wife. The only part it could take would be a passive one, that of not countenancing the aggressor, whichever it might be; but that is precisely the part it will not take, for fear of in any way compromising self, or jeopardizing its own little sordid interests, personal or collateral. And what else could you expect from a people whose very religion is political, and not spiritual; as by the phrase of 'Church and State,' is meant substance and shadow, the State being the reality, and the Church merely the decent appendage, the obligato phantom, which it is necessary to respect, as an evidence that the sun of prosperity continues to shine upon the substance. Everything in England is party spirit in politics, and hence it is that there is no real patriotism, while all is cliqueism in the press,

which accounts for there being no such thing as justice, personal or literary, praise or censure being chiefly done to order, and not according to merit or demerit."

"What a disgusting state of things," said I.

"Very; but they will get worse before they are better; for evils must always exhaust themselves before a re-action takes place. It is hard for those who have to bear "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" during the intermediate state of transition; but still the world *en masse* ought to be grateful to abuses, as but for them, it would have neither improvement nor knowledge. All men are selfish; but, Miriam, never marry a man in whom even the nature of his love proves that self is all!"

"Now, dear Mrs. Vavasour," said I, "do add to your already great kindness, by giving me a piece of advice. Do you not think that I had better send Nelly over to Ireland to bring Grace quietly over, unknown to my aunts, that she may avoid the storm that will not fail to burst upon her devoted head, if they are applied to for their permission, after everything has been arranged without them; though I mean, of course, that Nelly should be armed with a letter from papa, as her credentials, to be forwarded to my aunts after she and Grace have got safely away. But first I should tell you, that Nelly is our old nurse, and next to dear Uncle Paulett, I do believe the very kindest and best-hearted creature in the whole world."

Mrs. Vavasour reflected for a few minutes, and then said:

"On no account: with your father in the state he is in, it would never do to have you left in the house alone with him; neither would it do for your sister, at her age, to take so long a journey with only Nelly, however good a person she may be. But in another fortnight, at farthest, I must know whether Philip is coming here or not; and if he does, he will perhaps go with me; but if not, then I will go alone, at least, with only a man and maid, and bring your sister over. So write to-night, and tell her that she may expect an unknown but faithful old friend to come for her, in about a month from this."

"Oh! thank you, dear Mrs. Vavasour," cried I, throwing my arms round her neck; "how kind you are! You certainly ought to have been married to Uncle Paulett, for you think of every one, and every thing!"

"Then," said she, smiling, "I must think of asking you if there is such a thing as an inn where I can put up at, in the flourishing town of Clanfuddle?"

"No less than two," laughed I; "and thereby hangs a tale, or rather a sign, which I understand is also a wonder; for you must know the two hostelries are rivals, the original one having from time immemorial had the name of 'The Hog in Armour,' kept by one Lanty O'Toole, a tenant of Lord Clanfuddle's; but some ten years ago, I hear that an interloper from

Cork came, and had the audacity to set up an oppo sition 'Hog in Armour' facing it; upon this, Lant O'Toole goes to Lord Clanfuddle, and asks permissio to mount his Lordship's portrait for a sign, which th latter agrees to; but Lanty, to make surety doubl sure, the very first day that he displays his patron' effigy, has written under it, in gold letters a foo long—

"'This is the old original Hog in Armour.'"

Mrs. Vavasour, knowing Lord Clanfuddle, laughe heartily at this story, and declared that Lawrence coul not have made half so good a likeness of him. Sh then accompanied me down stairs, and invited m father so cordially and gracefully to dine with he whenever we could, that he accepted the invitation fo the next day. Take them all in all, the next thre weeks deserved to be ranked among the happiest o my life. I not only was so happy, but had so muc happiness in expectation!—my Uncle Paulett's return Grace's marriage! the delightful evenings we passed a Mrs. Vavasour's, where we sang, played, and buil castles in the air—at least I did—for as Mrs. Vavasou said, she went farther, heaven being the only place sh built on now. My father, it is true, used to fal asleep; but at all events that was better than leavin him to those horrible orgies with Tom Lutron. Ofte also I used to breakfast with Mrs. Vavasour, and ge back before twelve for my father's levée; and these

days were doubly happy, for we used to go to the house in Upper Berkeley Street; and if there is one happiness on earth greater than another, next to being with those we love, it is the making preparations for their being with us, anticipating all their wants and wishes, and at the same time their delight at having them forestalled.

On one occasion I remarked, that a certain pair of purple velvet slippers, lined with fur, and very daintily embroidered with golden violets, had been placed before the easy chair in my uncle's dressing-room. Also, in the chair, an eider down cushion, pourtraying an embroidered likeness of Fido, which for spirit, softness, and vitality would not have discredited Landseer.

"Ah!" said I, as a few tears fell upon this effigy of fidelity—for so are all tokens of affection sooner or later baptized in this world—"what a pity!"

"What is it that is a pity?" asked Mrs. Vavasour, as she came into the room, with one of those little miniature Vienna clocks which struck the hours, with a faint chime of fairy-like music, to the air of that old romance of "Au ciel tout se retrouve," which she now placed on a little table beside the great chair.

"Why, that you are not always at your post; for it seems to me that you ought to be here—that this is your proper place; and it is all nonsense talking about wrecks, for there are some wrecks more precious to their owners than the richest argosy that was ever freighted. And do you know, you and Uncle Paulett remind me

of those broken arches one sometimes sees in beautiful ruins, where the pillars are still standing as firmly as ever, though that which united them is riven, but which the shadows of the evening sun, by spanning a mystic arch, seems again to re-unite."

"With this difference, Mirry," replied she, with a melancholy smile, "that the evening shadows of your arch meet on earth, and ours can only meet in heaven."

"But I don't see why that should be."

"I'll tell you why; that is, I'll tell you a Greek fable, which might have been a myth then, but which is a *fact* now. Love, once upon a time, became enamoured of Chione, the niece of Plutus; but Hymen, tempting the avarice of Plutus by immense bribes, he sacrificed Chione to him. In due time, after leaving nothing undone to make her wretched, and succeeding to a miracle, Hymen died; for in those days, unlike ours, Hymen did *not* last for ever. Soon after, Love returned, and Chione opened her heart eagerly to admit him; but Hymen had left such a damp, dull gloom over this once glowing and happy spot, that poor Love soon caught cold, and died, too!"

I shook my head, and sighed, for the moral was too pointed to escape me.

"No doubt," thought I, "it is these mutilated fates that stalk through the world, and are clumsily joined to other broken halves which never were originally intended for them, that cause all the hopeless super-

human misery—which ravages society like a pestilence; —in short, these 'combinations of disjointed things.'"

It was a few evenings after the above conversation that we were at Mrs. Vavasour's, my father, as usual, asleep in an easy chair, Mrs. Vavasour at work, and Monsieur de Maillepré and I singing that pretty duet from "La Maison à Vendre" of

"Chère Elise, dis-moi je t'aime,"

when a carriage stopped at the door, and a thundering knock gave notice of an arrival.

"Oh! Philip, at last," exclaimed Mrs. Vavasour, letting her work drop from her hands, and rushing to the top of the stairs. Three minutes after, the door being open, I saw Tom Lutron, and heard his unmistakeable voice, in answer to Mrs. Vavasour's anxious interrogation of "My dear boy, is that you at last?" say:

"Upon me soul, Madam, this exsades me most sanguine expectations. I fail, or rather I felt, that an apology was jew (due) to a lady like yourself, for invading your house (not having the honour of your acquaintance) at such an unsaisonable hour; but when you resave me as your dear boy, and ask if that's me at last! I can only assure you, Madam, of me sinsare gratitude, and that I'm not the boy to disappoint any lady's expectations. So be satisfied, this is the last time I'll ever kape you waiting, since I find ye ex-

pected me. 'Blessed are th
True that, as that God mad
pected nothing, or at most
saving your presence, Ma'am
I ever saw in my life, expecti
there's money bid for ye, ye
a wink, as he pulled up his
Vavasour staggered back int
ened, and disappointed, and
chair.

Monsieur de Maillepré sto
his future relation, and I wis
and swallow us all up, so as
mutual scrutiny or conversati

"Monsieur de Maillepré,
sume? Sur, I have the hon
our family; and though I say
it, you might go farther, and

Monsieur de Maillepré bow
preciated his happiness.

And I my shame!

"Miss Miriam Sedley, you
cousin, since cousin he was
Parliament met yesterday, a
debate upon a new Bill
Popery—"

("Would to Heaven," tho
be an Act of Parliament for
relations, at least of Irish co

"—which being a staunch Orangeman—(grape man, at all events, I said,) I am extramely anxious to hear; but as this packet arrived from the Foreign Office, just as I was going down to the House—and I know how anxious you always are for letters from abroad—I said to Blucher and Spanker, none of your thorough-bred airs, ye divils, for it's post-horses ye'll have to be; and take this packet to Miss Miriam, though she never wonce (once) did ye the honour of taking a back view of your ears, and setting me off in me curricle, when I gave far worse-looking fellows the go-by in the Park; but never mind—good for evil, is Tom Lutron's motto; for the family one of *depressus extoller* don't happen to shute (suit) my taste, as I have no fancy for being humbled; and as for the other half of the motto—though, thanks to my own exertions, I'm often elevated, as they say in England, I've never yet been exalted, and I'll be hanged if I ever am; and as for taking the old motto literally, egad! as long as the English Lords of misrule continue to legislate for Ireland, there's little fear that they won't *depress us* enough."

As it is the peculiar and enviable privilege of great minds and noble natures, to occasionally raise by their magnetic power even the most base and sordid ones to their own level, so is it the happy art of perfect *savoir-vivre* and high breeding, to unvulgarize to a certain degree the most commonplace or underbred, who come within the mesmeric influence of their own polished

and highly-tempered manners; therefore, taking at the rebound Tom Lutron's pun, Monsieur de Maillepré entered into a political discussion with him, which had the twofold good effect of relieving Mrs. Vavasour and myself from his overpowering coarseness, and drawing him out to the best advantage, which so insensibly flattered the better portion of his vanity, that it piqued his self-love into being almost gentlemanlike before he took his departure, which, thank Heaven! he soon did, from his anxiety to hear the before-mentioned debate; and I thanked him very sincerely for his good nature in bringing me my packet; for with all his faults he had that golden, and too much underrated virtue of good nature, which in the republic of our moral qualities may be considered in the light of pscychological almsgiving; while good temper ranks as good principle, which systematically and uniformly provides for the wants and wishes of those dependent on it. I could not even open my packet till I heard the last sound of his wheels, though I saw it was from Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, and when I did, her envelope only contained these few melancholy lines, dated four days back.

"My dear Child,

"Alas! poor Bloom Belzoni has ceased to suffer, and is now in heaven: a fitter place for all pure, true and good natures than our miserable and all-corroding earth. She breathed her last to-night at ten o'clock

in my arms. Her death was as gentle as her life, with this difference, that the former, thank God! appeared free from pain. The inclosed packet has been some time in my possession; but her strict injunction was, that it was never to be given to you till after her death. Her poor father is inconsolable, but I do not think he will be long after her, for neither hearts nor plants last long when they have been uprooted. It seems almost a sacrilege to allude to anything joyous at such a moment, but I was truly rejoiced at hearing of dear Grace's intended marriage with Monsieur de Maillepré. Selon la Duchesse de C— T— c'est un charmant garçon sous tous les rapports, un grand seigneur et un digne et brave homme pardessus le marché. I shall certainly be in London for the wedding. God bless you. Ever your affectionate and faithful friend,

"ELODIE DE GUILLERAGUES."

"Paris, Rue du Bac,
"Ce 15 Janvier, 1819."

I was so blinded by tears, that it was some time before I could read what seemed to me almost like a communication from that shadowy land where we shall all go, but from whence none return to show us the way. I had no sooner opened the packet, than a lock of long fair hair, which I knew at once had been Bloom's, and a small diamond dove, attached to an almost imperceptibly fine Venetian chain, met my

view; it had belonged to her mother, and she had often shown it to me when I was a child. Here are her last words:

"Paris, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin,
"November 10th, 1818.

"When you receive this, dearest Miriam, the hand that writes, and the heart that dictates, these few lines, will both be cold. While I am yet able, let me then tell you how much I love you and Grace, and dear Sir George; and not the less that it is the last time in this world that I shall have the power of doing so. Before I make you a confession, Miriam, which none but you have ever heard, and I know ever will hear (not even Grace, since I enjoin the most sacred secrecy), I must touch upon more worldly matters, and of more personal interest to yourself. My father, you know, was once the wealthiest merchant in the Levant; but ever since I can remember, he said he was poor, and appears to be so. Nevertheless, I have sometimes had misgivings on that point; but be it as it may, I have entreated him to divide between you, and Grace, whatever he may have intended for me—be it much, or be it little—giving you, however, the Benjamin's portion. His answer was, that after providing for me, he had always intended to leave all he possessed in the world to your good uncle, Sir George, with the reversion to you and Grace. So that you see, dearest Miriam, if you are not one day rich, it will be because my father

and I were not not so, in gold, but only in gratitude and affection to you and yours; therefore, whatever the deed may be, I am very sure you will all three acknowledge and accept the will that framed it. And now to accomplish the painful task that I have imposed upon myself.

"Last May, as you are aware, I went on a visit to Madame de St. Florentin, at Château Le Henri, near Caën. You have no idea what a paradise of a place it is, or was, when I was there; one blush of roses, with the nightingales singing to them all night long; nice old moats, *plaisances*, and *charmilles* without, and plenty of armour and old Bayeux tapestry within, upon all of which chivalric eyes had once rested, and under which chivalric hearts had once glowed; in short, this old *castel* is at once the cradle, and the tomb, of romance. What wonder, then, that it has been both to me? You remember, Miriam—oh yes! you cannot forget it—that once when you were quite a child, but I was about fifteen, I was not allowed for some time to come and see you. My father, on our first coming to Paris, told me why. It was because the son of the man who had ruined my poor mother was on a visit to your uncle. Alas! Miriam, it is astonishing how wide the roots of evil spread; further than those who sow the seed can ever dream, or I think the very worst would pause before they bequeathed so dire a heritage to the yet unborn.

"I had not been a fortnight at Château Le Henri,

before that man's son, with his tutor, came on a visit for three days. I kept my room on pretence of illness, but from real horror at the idea of meeting him; for I hated him for *his* father's and *my* mother's sake; but as we do not make our own fate, neither can we escape it. On the fourth day, there were to be people from Caën to dinner, and music in the evening; and Madame de St. Florentin insisted upon my coming down. I could not describe to you the sort of reversionary shame (not to say agony) I felt at meeting this young man, therefore I will not attempt to do so; I even winced more than usual under the sense of my deformity. Was not his father the indirect cause of it? for had he not deprived me of my mother? And what is a child without a mother, but the target and plaything of misfortune? I never once looked at him, though he sang some things from the 'Semiramide,' in a voice at once so masterly, and so imploring, that my very soul was made captive by a chain of such insidious harmony, that I struggled against it in vain, for it was too soft to resist, and yet too strong to break.

"Madame de St. Florentin then insisted upon my singing; and of all things, chose that Venetian canzonet that you used to like, 'Come si chiame questo ragazzo?' When I ceased, *his* applause was the most cordial; and he said: 'May I ask if that is published, or is it in manuscript?' I was obliged to raise my eyes to his to answer him. They were those sort

of loadstone eyes, which appear to draw everything irresistibly towards them; but when they looked at yours intentionally, they then seemed to have a sort of mysterious polar influence, towards which, by some secret affinity, one's heart was compelled to turn, or in trying not to do so, to flutter, and rust within its narrow compass.

"The next day, the next, and many next days after that. The tutor, a stiff, impassible-looking man went away to see William the Conqueror's tomb, in l'Abbaye aux Hommes, at Caën; Matilda's, in l'Abbaye aux Dames; Charlotte Corday's house, and several other excursions; all day in some way or other, we were together; and in the evening Madame de St. Florentin used to have the dessert and the guitars brought into one of those beautiful old *charmilles*, where the moon kept running in and out, as if playing at hide and seek with its own beams, till it finally mirrored itself in one broad silver sheet over the waters of the lake beyond. Sometimes, Madame de St. Florentin would be called away to visitors, and we would be left alone with the music and the moonlight—once, and only once, he paid me a compliment, though I think he must have been laughing at me, for am I not deformed? But still there was something I had never heard, nor felt before, in any other voice, or even in his till then; it seemed to sink gently and subtlely down into the innermost depths of my heart, in the way that I can fancy a bee whispers into the bell of a flower, till

it extracts all the honey from it; and yet all he said was: 'you are very like a beautiful picture I once saw of Beatrice Cenci, not the well-known one at the Barbarini, but one I saw of her at Albano, done when she was quite young, before sorrow and shame, and their hard task-master insanity, had branded her.' Am I? said I, and there the subject ended.

"On another evening, I dropped a bracelet; he stooped to look for it in the grass, and when he had found it, remained kneeling while he re-clasped it on my arm. Miriam! upon the solemn assurance of a fleeting soul, I swear to you he never uttered the word Love to me; that is in reference to himself, and myself, how could he? you know what I am, and the barrier which nature, or rather accident has placed between me and the power of inspiring such a feeling; and it was not His fault if nature had given to the inflections of his voice a depth, and a tenderness, which lent to even the most commonplace words, a charm and an unction, which generally only the most fond and the most impassioned possess. No, we talked of Italy, of music, of dear———, of you, Mirry, in short, of anything and everything but love; and yet, to the suicidal fanaticism of my own wild heart, it seemed *all love!* Did I live, I could not for shame tell you my weakness; but I am dying, Miriam, and I would fain leave what I fear was a sin behind me. Pray for me, dear Miriam, for I hope to go where I shall find many a prayer as a memento of you, for,

surely that love must be even pure enough for Heaven which is filtered through prayer.

"Had he loved me, it would have been worse, for with our parents' sin on both our heads, what *it* had separated could never have been united.

"The day at length came when we parted; you know that day always does come. You will think me very weak, very contemptible, I fear, to—to—what shall I say, to be so engrossed by a person who did not think of me; it is weak to faint, but can we help it? From that hour I knew I had made a compact with death, (the only friend that could come to my assistance); and, when the final moment of our separation arrived, and he kissed my hand, as is the custom of this country, I felt that that compact was sealed.

"I returned home, I could not of all people in the world tell my poor father, still less could I tell any one else: I had, like many others, to devour my grief in silence, and intense grief, like every other serious malady, must be fatal when it strikes inward. Love me still, dear Miriam, but don't regret me, for I am very happy, as I feel that those who die young, no matter how terrible the suffering may have been that causes their death, are God's especial favourites; they found the cup of life too bitter, and He in mercy dashed it from them. I also feel the nearer I approach to them, that through the portals of death, lies the only real life, and that what we term such in this world is but a dream, or rather a nightmare to the

many—a light and happy dream to some, but still, even to such, only a brief and fleeting vision: besides, the spirit once freed from its corporeal fetters, must be free, and as such, partake of the ubiquity of the Great Spirit from which it emanates. So you see, Miriam, I am only going, that I may be with you, and with all I love on earth in reality. And now, good bye, dearest Miriam; wear for my sake, the little emblem of peace I enclose you—wear it next your heart, Mirry, and may it never desert so gentle a nest. When you come to Paris, I know you will come and see me: don't strew roses or heliotrope, mignionette, myrtle, or any other flowers on my grave, but violets, for I loved them well in life. There were beautiful ones, both white and purple, in the woods at Château Le Henri; he used to bring me a bouquet of them every morning: I have them all, though they have faded and gone before me: and dear Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who has been so good and kind to me, has promised, that when I am dead, they shall be laid on my heart, and buried with me. Once more, good bye, and that God may bless you all, will be the last prayer in death, as it has been the first in life, of—

"Your sincerely affectionate friend,

"Bloom Belzoni."

Oh, Death! so terrible at all times to those whom he leaves, is doubly so in the first he takes from us,

for it is to the living he gives all the horrors of the grave. As like all other despots, on his chosen he bestows great privileges, and to them brings glad tidings; but the poor bereaved can only rend their hearts, (that miserable earthly garment of the soul), at his dread, and inexorable favoritism. I thought of my extraordinary vision, or second sight, or whatever it had been, at the hotel in Jermyn Street; and I was so overpowered, that I had scarcely sufficient presence of mind to conceal this afflicting, and on all accounts, sacred packet; but even without the solemn injunction to secrecy it contained, I would not for worlds that Mrs. Vavasour should have seen it; for though he was not mentioned by name, she would have known that her son was the person alluded to, having good reason to remember the fate of Madame Belzoni, and not being one of those highly culpable mothers, who think their sons infallible, and call their trifling with a woman's feelings, "a little flirtation," or dismiss their grosser vices with the demoralizing truism, that "young men will be young men," knowing, as she did, that a vicious and heartless youth generally makes a villanous and hypocritical old age. And although, according to poor Bloom's statement, it did not appear that Philip Vavasour had been in this instance to blame, yet I am very sure his mother would not have wholly acquitted him, but would have thought of the poor broken-hearted girl in her grave, and upon that one fact, have recorded a verdict against him.

I was taken home more dead than alive, and had a severe illness. Nothing could be kinder than Mrs. Vavasour was; she nursed me night and day in a very different manner to that in which I had been *un*attended at Concave House, for Grace had written her word that she would not hear of her coming over for her before the end of March; and as she had also had a letter from her son saying, that it was not likely he should be in England before April or May, she had nothing to do but to kindly devote her whole time to me. My poor father, too, used to sit till late at night by my bed-side, and often would put aside the curtain and say, in an humble, gentle, and affectionate voice, like that of a child reporting itself out of mischief:

"You see Mirry, darling, I'm here; I'm not down stairs with Tom."

Poor Father! at all events there was no stiff-necked stubborn pride in your nature, and where that is not, no vice can totally devastate, for humility is to the heart, what cleanliness is to metal—it prevents it from ever thoroughly corroding. In those long sleepless nights, I would think of poor Bloom—not indeed as poor Bloom, but as a happy and beatified spirit; free in the immutable eternity of a glorious certainty, communing with God, and knowing all things—even to that great dark enigma of the present, which the future alone can solve, of why so many longings, wants, capacities, and necessities *are in our nature,* which *are not in our fate;* so many harmonious aspirations and

divine foreshadowings which have no realization on earth;—yes, it is—it must be, that we have left them above at our creation, and can only snatch at their echoes and shadows here—till we again rejoin them above. Oh! fruitless toil, then, to seek them here! and repeating the last two lines of Chiabrera's epitaph, I fell into a calm sleep:

"Tu meglio consigliato cercatelo,
Sul Monte Calvario!"

CHAPTER X.

Spring had returned, and had contrived to penetrate even through the smoke of London; but my poor father, instead of reviving with it, appeared to be drooping fast, as it seemed to me each day that I missed a leaf from the few that remained upon his poor withered tree of life; he no longer liked to drive out, he said that it fatigued him; but when there was any sun he liked walking up and down on the broad flags in George Street, opposite the church. Mrs. Vavasour had set out on her kind journey to bring Grace over, and two days after her son had arrived he came to see me, and to bring me a dictated letter from dear Uncle Paulett, whom he had left in Paris to have the cataract taken off of his eyes, and immediately after—oh, joyful words! he was to return to England. Philip Vavasour certainly was very hand-

some—fascinating, I believe most young ladies would have called him; but I suppose mine is a frigid and unimpressionable nature, for I'm sure I never could be in love with any man who did not get me much into his debt, by first loving me exceedingly, and letting me see that he did so, even oftener than hear it.

Philip came every evening, and sang with me, and Monsieur de Maillepré; poor Bloom had not exaggerated the charm of his voice. He also contrived to embellish my life with those thousand little delicate nameless attentions, which derive their value from being imperceptible to all, save to the person on whom they are bestowed. The ugly rooms in Maddox Street began to be tricked into a fictitious grace with books, and flowers, that they had never known before; for the few and far between plants which I had hitherto been able to indulge in, had only served to make their ugliness more glaring, like a solitary jewel in the toad style on the forehead of an ugly woman; but now profusion, as it often does, covered much that was defective. Each morning some fresh attention greeted me when I came down, yet still I did not love Philip Vavasour, for I loved his mother too well, and regretted poor Bloom too sincerely, to do that in a hurry; for it seemed to me that I had a long account to settle with him, about both first.

I had an irrepressible longing to ascertain what his feelings had really been towards the latter; but linked as it was with her dying confession, her name seemed

to me too sacred to mention lightly before him. Could I have done so, I would have trusted to the infallible freemasonry all women possess upon those subjects (more especially when they have a personal interest in them) to discover the exact truth; but not being able to broach the matter, I was obliged to endure all the torments of doubt and suspense, till one evening one of those little magic chances, which so often achieve, in a moment, that which we have been whole days and nights in vain trying to bring about, brought the long-wished for opportunity. In looking over some music, some manuscript barcaroles, and romances, that poor Bloom had given me, fell accidentally out of a book; they could not but recall the donor, and I burst into tears.

"Ah! poor Miss Belzoni," said Philip tenderly, but without any emotion; "she was very fond of you; we often used to talk of you. When I met her last summer in Normandy, what a nice girl she was! and would have been beautiful, but for that defect in her figure, which, after all, was less disfiguring than anything of the kind I ever saw."

"But did you not think her very beautiful in spite of it?" said I, raising my eyes to his, and looking into them, with an intensity that must have drawn out any hidden truth.

"Yes, very; but it was a sort of supernatural beauty that never excited an earthly feeling; it was admiration—pure unleavened admiration—such as one might

have for sculptured perfection, where the heart remains as cold as the statue—"

"Which once Pigmalion had worshipped into animation," rejoined I, continuing my inquisitorial glance.

"Ah! that was *once*," said he, with a smile, "but such things don't happen twice; but I was wrong to liken her to a statue; that is too insentient—too unelastic. She was more the incarnation of one of those wild German tales; in fact, one of those elfin creations, the offspring of a moonbeam, and a wave, which love might touch either into mortal life,—or death."

I shuddered at the unintentional truth of this simile, but, at the same time, there was an incubus removed from my mind. Oh, no! he had neither loved her, nor trifled with her; for, in either case, he would not have spoken as he had done of her—conscience or regret would have equally prevented him. Still, though he came every day, sometimes twice a-day, and did all he could to make me think he loved me, he never told me so. Once or twice that we were alone, he appeared hurried and agitated, as if on the point of saying something; and then he would suddenly seize his hat, and rush out of the room. All this sort of wayward, unaccountable, and apparently causeless frenzy agitated and made me very unhappy, chiefly to feel that he had the power of doing so. I did not know what to make of it; but I knew what I ought to do—keep out of his way—and I resolved to do it. In accordance with this

[illegible] was the beginning [illegible] at my own room. [illegible] Neely [illegible] with a letter that had just come by the [illegible] and all on [illegible]. The very first [illegible] that I had seen as I was told the beginning [illegible].

'Another from Miss,' as Neely still called him, 'and [illegible].'

'Is he now?' said I, half doubting that I say yes. I took the [illegible] and put them into water.

'Yes, Miss, he is gone, and had me say he [illegible] come to evening, because he was going out.'

[illegible] I had told them to say that I was engaged with my mother, and would not see him, if he should come in the evening; yet I felt my lip with vexation, to think that he had no intention of coming, but was going out, as if it was a pleasure and an amusement that I had not been in the world. I'm sure, I wish I had [illegible]. After all, what was it to me where he went? and so I took up the letter, and opened it so hastily that I nearly tore it in two, which would only have been suiting the action to the word, if I had. It was from Miss Sherwood, and what between the spelling, and the writing, I think I could have become fluent over an Egyptian obelisk, or mummy, in half the time. At length, I deciphered that Helen Penrose had left Concave House very soon after I did, and that Jessy Pane was to sail for Calcutta next year with my correspondent. And then came the

cream of the letter, or perhaps the cream of tartar would be the more appropriate phrase.

"You must know," continued Miss Sherwood, "that the great run for the lady's plate (and dishes!) came off yesterday, when Glauber Rodolphus was taken, or rather bolted; and therefore did not get the plate. Great betting on the favourite for a fortnight before; two to one against Omeny, were Jemima's odds; and I also took James the Second against the field.

"Up to the day before yesterday it was not known which of the damsels it was to be; there was but one thing certain, *i.e.*, that Glauber Rodolphus, as in those Spanish bull fights, you used to tell us of, was, as he himself would say, to be lead to the halter, having been captured by a lass-o! But it seems that on this memorable day, the contest ran so high between the James and the Omeny, as to which had the best right to become Mrs. Glauber Rodolphus Perkins, the second, as they had at length insisted upon the death of the first Mrs. Perkins, that Miss Omeny drew forth those eternal scissors of hers, some say to stab herself with, while others (of which number is Jemima) declare that it was, like a second Solomon, to divide Glauber Rodolphus between them. Miss James screamed, and fainted. Glauber Rodolphus drew out his lancet, and bled her in the arm, by which means he got another day's reprieve; as he said, a wedding would be too hagitating a ceremony for her.

"At sight of the blood, Miss Omeny fainted also; and when she came to, abdicated in favour of Miss James, generously declaring that she would not be the cause of any more bloodshed. Well, this morning the bride looked as lovely as a new white satin bonnet, and plenty of starch in her face and cap could make her; and the bridal party glass-coached it to church, the victim Omeny acting as bridesmaid, and I suppose I need not tell you, all Mammon House in full grin, over the wall, with this delicate attention on the part of the young gentlemen who had, instead of favours, stuck, tied on with pack-thread, a pink paper round the top of their hats, with a white paper label, like a physic phial, sticking out from the left side of them; while, instead of flowers, they showered down little paper pellets, or pills, upon 'the happy pair!' Miss Hunter and I were of the party; when we got to the church-door, Glauber Rodolphus, as he handed his bride-elect out of the carriage, said, devoutly turning up his eyes in anticipated resignation: 'I ope as nothink may appen to hinterrupt hour appiness.' 'Pray what should happen to interrupt it, Mr. Perkins?' said Miss James, as tartly as if she had been ten years Mrs. P., and had had time to grow savage and sensible. 'I don't know,' rejoined Glauber Rodolphus, faintly; 'but—but bigamy, Miss James, puts one sometimes hinto greater *transports* than marriage!' 'Bigamy! Mr. Perkins! why what are you thinking of? with your first wife under ground these four

years.' 'Well, well, I ope it may prove so; but one never can tell what may turn up in this world.' 'I should think there was no danger, Mr. Perkins,' said I, 'for did you not attend her in her last illness?' 'No, hI was unfortinately habsent,' said Perkins. 'What a pity, for one never can he sure of anything, unless one does it one'sself;' and with this last damping speech of mine we entered the church; Perkins, I must tell you, looking like a wild cat rabidly in all directions, or like a criminal at the foot of the gibbet expecting a reprieve at the last moment.

"And sure enough scarcely had we reached the altar, before up rushed a demented-looking woman, in a bran new flaxen wig (evidently new on for the occasion) a yellow bonnet, crimson shawl, and blue gown, forcibly seizing Glauber Rodolphus, and calling Miss James all the jades imaginable, 'for to come, for to go, for to think, for to take and tice away her lawful usband; but she'd have the law of her, she would.' Even for Mrs. Perkins, I was surprised at the elegance of her language; but on our return home, Jemima explained the mystery, by telling us that Mr. Perkins, as a forlorn hope, had got up these private theatricals, the play being 'The Jealous Wife,' and that Nanny Nangles, a strapping laundress, the bosom friend of Mrs. Quince, had been prevailed upon, for the sum of two pounds, and the free use of the surgery for herself and her heirs, to personate the injured and reinstated Mrs. Perkins. Miss James, though in strong hysterics

ever since, declares she would rather die than ever let another doctor into Concave House, at which there have been public rejoicings in the school-room; while Miss Omeny has grown very placid and contented, no doubt thinking, that as she *was* to be done out of a husband, it was much better that that ceremony should have taken place quietly in the back drawing-room at Concave House.

"Tibbs brought word to-night, on his return from Hammersmith, that the cook at Seidlitz Lodge told him, that soon after her master's return home, they were afraid he had committed suicide, as they had heard a loud report in Mr. Perkins's bed-room; but upon her, the housemaid, and the boy in buttons that carries out the physic rushing in, Mr. Perkins was discovered quietly putting a bottle of brandy back into the closet, which he always keeps there in case of illness, and handing them an empty soda-water bottle. He told buttons to bring another, and to look sharp. which Tibbs says he always does, being 'the leanest boy between this and Brentford;' and so ends this old play of 'many a slip between the cup and the lip,' as also the letter of—

"Yours sincerely,

"C. SHERWOOD."

I was still laughing over Miss Sherwood's account of Mr. Perkins's execution, and the royal clemency he had arranged for himself, when Nelly returned to say

that my father wished me to put on my things, and go out with him. We went our usual beat up and down the flags opposite St. George's Church, to obtain the little sun there was to be had. We had not taken more than two turns, before who should we see coming down from Hanover Square, from his own house in fact, but Sir Joseph Paulett, with his usual commander-in-chief air, leaning on a flagrantly over-done-looking man of about thirty: all hair and handkerchief, and chained and ringed like a macaw, who appeared by his loud laugh to have just uncorked some rare jest, which he and his companion were quaffing with great *gusto*. From the manner in which he stared at me, it was evident that I had outgrown Don José's recollection; but his companion no sooner approached us, than starting back a step or two, and holding out his hand to my father, he exclaimed:

"Bless my soul! Sedley, is that you? How do, old boy?"

"Ah! how d'y do, my Lord?" said my father, coolly, with a sort of Diogenes' look, that seemed to say, I wish you'd stand out of my sunshine.

"Sedley," cried Don José, "why, surely this is not my little friend, Miriam?"

I certainly had no recollection of the friendship, but I acknowledged my identity by saying:

"Yes. How d'y do, Sir Joseph? How are Lady Paulett and Fiametta?"

Instead of immediately replying to my question

Don José threw himself into a theatrical attitude, and exclaimed:

"Angels were painted in straw hats to look like you."

"Were they?" said I; "I can't say that I ever saw any so pourtrayed, for the *chapeau de paille* is certainly no angel."

"Dosey and Fia are quite well," said he, still staring at me in the rudest manner. "We did not know you were in town, or should have been to see you, though we only arrived ourselves last week. Where are you? You must come to us this evening. Dosey has a few people coming *en petit comité*. My dear, introduce me to your father, will you?"

I did so, and my poor father with difficulty took off his hat, and then said to me aside, while Don José was saying something to his companion, in an under-voice:

"Is that the uncle you are so fond of, Mirry?"

"Oh! good heavens, no," said I, as indignantly as if my poor father had been aware of the bad compliment he was paying to one of the noblest, most generous, and most independent of men, in mistaking him for one of the meanest, the most selfish, and the most worldly.

"Come—dang it! Sedley, it's not fair to keep all the good things to yourself," said Don José's friend: "introduce me to that pretty daughter of yours, will you?"

"Miriam, my dear, Lord ——. 'Pon my word, my Lord, I forget your name," said my father, breaking down in the introduction.

"Miriam, my dear," interposed Don José, with his usual off-hand, manage-everybody-himself sort of manner, "allow me to introduce to you my future son-in-law, and your future cousin, Lord Mountflummery."

"'Pon honour," said the latter, on the strength of our coming cousinship, "I think I am entitled to a shake of that pretty little hand."

"Oh! I have no doubt," rejoined I, not putting out my hand, but bowing very coldly, "that your Lordship will find plenty of people to cozen, without cozening me."

This was very pert, and certainly not in the best taste in the world; yet such a horror have I of that detestable English selfishness, which thinks that no vice ought to be noticed or condemned, unless it has been exercised towards self, that I really fear, were Blue Beard to come to London, and take a house in Carlton Gardens, and give balls and private theatricals every night, I should make myself exclusive and conspicuous, and consequently ridiculous, by not accepting an invitation to them; or were dear Harry the Eighth again seated on the English throne, notwithstanding his having gone a-head in the Reformation—even he might ax (e) me, but I certainly should not go; at

least, as long as I piqued hi
probity, or respectability.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed
"you must make Miss Sedley
and then I hope we shall beco

"My dear Mr. Sedley," s
rely upon your sending Mir
early—mind, Mirry, before te

"Oh, yes," said my fathe
you for asking her. I'm so
last, for she never goes anyw
a good girl, a very good
Mirry?"

"To be sure, I am, dear
'if you say so; and I think
you know, they say that g
children?"

My father pressed my wris
Don José giving his old "al
pocket, said, holding out one
must be down at the Horse-
now wants a quarter, so *adio*
use in asking you to come?"

I was struck with the good
of this speech; but as my fat
least did not heed it, I said no

"Oh! no, thank you, I a
the friends walked on; how d

ing delicacy and respect of Monsieur de Maillepré. On our return home we found an invitation to a ball at the French embassy; but the invitation was for Mr. and Miss M. Sedley, for people can always refuse, but it is at least courteous, and well-bred, to give them the option of doing so; and this my father felt, deadened as his perceptions were, for it is a curious physiological fact, that long after the ear is too dull to hear, or the eye to see an unkind word or look, and the heart too numbed to feel them, kindness, like electric fluid, can still penetrate and illumine their density, and their darkness; it is, I suppose, that both are emanations from above.

My father made such a point of my going to the Paulett's that evening, and when I for a long time resisted, he seemed so hurt, as if he thought I would not trust him for one evening alone, and made me so unhappy when he began putting himself on his parole about his conduct during my absence, that I put my arm round his neck and said:

"Pray, dear papa, say no more about it, and I'll go, and bring you back all the news I can pick up, if you are not asleep when I come home."

I had the less scruple in leaving him, that I knew Nelly would take as much care of him as I could, and as Tom Lutron never dined at home now, there was not much to fear. My wardrobe was neither very extensive, nor very *recherché;* but I was at that happy age, when nature does more for one than dress can

do; and as the Indian muslin at Mr. Perkins's, was perf white, thanks to Nelly's gua Mademoiselle de Guilleragues two essential points of dres *chaussée* and *bien gantée*, by of Paris shoes and gloves, my dress, especially as I, (t *prévenance*,) had also a very slip to put under my dress, a my hair; but even had I non always plenty of ambulating twelfth-cake queens, to kee England, even among the *ha* when I completed my toilet b rosebuds in my bosom, for *b* invented; had Victorine herse Parisian fashions) turned me o been more satisfied; for she d think "the blessed Vargin he dress," to which I modestly the fashions are different now,

I went down to kiss my fath

"Poor child," said he return after me as I left the room, mother. Heaven send you bet

But even then I wished for be soon in Heaven. The goi to me anything but pleasure, f

dread of—not exactly of the evil eye, but certainly of the evil influence, of being with persons who don't like you, and whom you know to be hollow to you, and consequently whom you don't like; however, if one only herded with the staunch, the true, the sympathetic, and the amiable, I'm afraid one's intercourse with society would soon be reduced to an occasional and rare *tête-à-tête*. So girding on my armour like a social Gideon, as I ascended Lady Paulett's staircase, I determined to do battle bravely with the annoyances of the evening whatever they might be, at all events; at the onset it was a pleasure to traverse three large and lofty rooms, hung with fine pictures, and brilliantly lit with those fairy-like rays, "made by the bee, from the lily and the rose," as some one prettily describes wax-lights, and to exhale that soft perfumed atmosphere upon which seems to float the harmony of gentle thoughts; for there is a sort of high-dried vulgarity about a London lodging-house, which in time smokes one down to the platitude of a red-herring, with, however, the *salt* left out; and thanks to my late *séjour* in Maddox Street, feeling exceedingly like this peculiar species of flat fish, I entered Lady Paulett's drawing-room.

I had come early as I had been desired: it wanted a few minutes of ten, the men had not yet left the dining-room, which accounted for the solemn silence that prevailed, though there was a goodly crowd of petticoats of all ages; since the world began, or at least since the time of Mrs. and the Miss Noahs there

has been a joke, which from running all over the world has at length rolled itself into a proverb about female garrulity—ah! I only wish mankind in general and Englishmen in particular, could see a party of "British females" (for this dumbness at this hour is peculiar to them) ruminating after dinner; but they can't, and as their arrival from the dining-room always breaks the spell, of course, they don't believe it any more than if it was a thing that had been stated in a letter from a Cabinet Minister, M. Cahagnet's celestial telegraph, or a puff in a county paper.

Divers youthful forms were in a half-reclining attitude upon the settees and divans round the room, looking overpowered either with sleep or spleen; but raising their eyes when I entered with such a stare of scrutiny and discontent, that I began to be afraid that I had in some mysterious and unaccountable manner personally injured, outraged, or at least offended them all. Into the *bergères* and *causeuses* were stuffed various awful specimens of the ancient "British females," painted almost like the ancient Britons, and looking perfectly rabid with rouge and false ringlets, while some of them, from their austere and forbidding countenances, forcibly reminded one of Evelyn's description of the severe winter of 1658, wherein he says, that "the crows' feet were frozen to their prey;" for could I have spared any pity from myself, I should most unquestionably have pitied the poor crows' feet and wrinkles that were frozen into

those awful faces. In a *fauteuil* near a window, throned the great personage of the evening—the grand dowager of the assemblage: this I concluded from the anxious and deferential attention that Lady Paulett was bestowing upon her; nor was I mistaken, as I afterwards was introduced to her and found that she was the Dowager-Duchess of Clapperclaw, so celebrated for her management of hemews and husbands, as she had by a scientific process of galvanized vapour prolonged the days of three of the former, while by an equally scientific system of counter-irritation shehad shortened those of two of the latter.

Near her, on a stool in the window, sat a poor little pale-faced boy, reading, his elbows on his knees, and his shoulders up to his ears. This was little Lord Catagraph, her eldest daughter's eldest son. At a respectful distance from him was a pretty, mild, lady-like, but intelligent-looking young person. Poor thing! she was the nursery-governess, and always was taken out as a part of the paraphernalia of little Lord Catagraph, to carry his hat and gloves, or even any stray idea he might chance to pick up while he was out, lest, not being used to it, it might fatigue him to carry it home in his own head. No sooner had the groom of the chambers announced my name to Lady Paulett, than, actually quitting her devotional attitude before the Duchess of Clapperclaw, she came half-way to meet me, shook me kindly by the hand, and told me I was so much grown, that she should not have known me, and then putting her head into the door-way of a little boudoir, called Fiametta, who came, looking exceedingly pretty, but over flushed, as if with forced spirits, and an unquiet drooping of the eyelids, which seemed to bear witness that they did not always laugh.

"Fia, here's Miriam," said her mother: "now should you have known her?"

"Oh! how d'y do, dear?" said the former, so coldly

that the kiss that followed her words seemed more like part of the ceremony of a mock pageant than anything real. "And how is Grace? and how are the Antidotes?" added she, showing her very fine teeth, with what would have been a smile, but that there was not a gleam of joy in it.

I then congratulated her upon her marriage, which was to take place at the end of the month.

"*Il y a bien de quoi,*" replied she, with an angry flush: and then, suddenly turning pale, said: "I must go back to Lady Sarah Clive," with which she left me.

As Lady Paulett had again been applied to the Dowager Duchess, I looked round to see if there was a vacant seat near the pretty-looking governess, for she had a round, dimpled face, and good humour seemed to lurk in every dimple, which I thought would be an excellent altrative, to the formidable Roman noses, thin, sharp faces, bony necks, and scraggy elbows ranged round the room, like a human *chevaux de frise*. But, alas! there was no vacant seat near her, as she was in the corner, close to the boudoir-door, behind Her Grace of Clapperclaw, so I was fain to take up my position on a small ottoman on the other side of little Lord Catagraph, and behave myself, that is, not speak, till I was spoken to; but, unfortunately, bad habits are not easily laid aside, and I had not been seated five minutes before Lord Catagraph, looking up from his book, and despairingly round the room, like Orpheus looking for Euridice, burst into the following interrogatory soliloquy:

"What is a weeping birch?"

"A birch rod," said I.

"Oh!—and do they grow?"

"Yes—like the Prince Regent."

"How like the Prince Regent?"

"More unpopular every day."

"Oh!—"

The poor governess, though I am sure she had loads of dimples to put it in, seemed terribly distressed as to how on earth she should hide her laughter; while the Duchess of Clapperclaw, making a sort of Archimedes screw of her right hand on the arm of the chair, lifted up her ponderous weight sufficiently to turn slowly round, and bring the battery of her heavy eyebrows and fierce eyes full upon me; till every moment I expected to hear the report of those pistol eyes going off, and to see my brains bespattering little Lord Catagraph; but nothing of the kind occurred, and after the Duchess of Clapperclaw had taken sufficient observations, she said, avoiding the ill breeding of a whisper, and quite loud enough for me to hear—

"Who is that?"

"A cousin of Sir Joseph's," said Lady Paulett.

"Well, hasn't she a name?" growled the Dowager, addressing Lady Paulett, but still staring me full in the face.

"Oh, yes, Miss Sedley."

"Introduce her to me—pretty girl—ask her to my ball."

"Miriam," said Lady Paulett, nodding to me to come to her, which I did: "I want to introduce you to the Duchess of Clapperclaw."

I bowed; the Duchess heaved in her chair and said—

"Fond of dancing?" but whether as a profession of her *own* opinions, or an inquiry into mine, I was left in doubt; but taking it for granted that it was the latter, I replied—

"Oh, very."

"Have a ball on the 15th of May, shall be happy to see you," boomed the same deep sepulchral voice.

"Thank your Grace, but I scarcely think I shall be

in town, as I am sorry to
invalid."

"Never mind, you *must* c
having more beauty at m
London. Where are you, e

Not then being as well ac
world as I was after, I'm not s
intuition of how I should lo
of thirty thousand a year,
came to see me at a shabby
no matter had I been the T
and cardinal virtues concent
fection; but I could not b
seeing my father, or of kee
that I might see them; so
de Maillepré had half arran
for the next day but one, an
of romance nor a saint, and
of unerring perfection, upo
boldly built this florid excus

"You are very good, but
to-morrow."

Where are you going to, e

"Richmond," faltered I,
generally are) in my own tra

"Oh! ah! Richmond,

Heaven forgive me, I mad
plied the falsehood I did not

"Sedley, Sedley, what ha
and beautiful dancing. Oh,
gravine of Anspach told me
to my old friend Sir George
niece of his danced some odd
it any relation of yours, eh?"

"I'm afraid it was me," s

"And what was the name
could remember it."

"The Cracovienne."

"I wish you'd dance it for me now."

I, with some difficulty assured this rather too *exigeante* lady, that not being an opera-dancer I was not in the habit of making such public exhibitions, though I had done so once when I was quite a child.

"But Fia Paulett dances all her Spanish dances for me whenever I ask her, before any one and every one."

"Well, that only proves that she is more obliging than I am." Here a sudden and electric rustling of silks, fluttering of fans, and hum of voices—not unlike the sudden uprousing of an aviary when one goes into it of a night with a light, or the flapping of the wings of the glums and glowries in Peter Wilkins. I looked round, and perceived that every statue was animated, that every frown was changed into a smile, that the dumb spoke! and the blind saw! in short, that every Roman nose had found a countryman; *vulgo*, the gentlemen were gradually coming up from dinner. How wretched every poor Turkish Ambassador must feel in this country, that is, if he is a pious Musselman and a loyal subject, to think how comparatively little *his* master the Sultan is made of, by his Odalesques to what every English squire, with anything like a rental, is by "*British females.*" One of the very first of the national idols that entered the room was Philip Vavasour. He gave a slight start at seeing me; but his face was radiant as he walked up to me; but seeing the Clapperclaw telescopes upon us, he bowed very respectfully, and said—

"I did myself the honour of calling upon Mr. Sedley this morning, Miss Sedley, and am sorry I was not fortunate enough to find either of you at home."

"That is generally the fate of morning visits," said I.

"Not *always*," he replied, pointedly; and as an

ugly rakish-looking young man, with hay-coloured hair and evaporated-looking eyes, who seemed to have taken rather too much wine, now came up to speak to the Duchess, I retreated nearer the window and said—

"Thank you so much for these lovely moss rose-buds; it was so good of you to bring them to me."

"Not good to give what one does not value. But now, indeed," added he, in a low voice, "I should value it if you would give me one; will you? Oh *do*, Miriam, *dear* Miriam."

Never before had he called me Miriam. I felt that my cheeks were redder than the flowers, and more in a crisis of nervous trepidation than as a free-will offering, I took one of the buds out of my bosom and gave it to him, trembling as if I had committed some dreadful crime, and feeling almost as frightened, I timidly raised my eyes, and standing in the door way I saw Fiametta, who flung at us, like a curse, one withering glance of mingled hatred and vengeance. Philip saw it, too, and walked away; the room seemed to go round with me. I felt cold and faint. The next minute I heard her reply to a question, that a gentleman with the star and ribbon of the Garter asked her, I suppose, about me, as she looked at me all the time: she answered him in the most insulting manner: "Oh, only a poor relation of papa's!"

I was no longer cold; the blood actually seemed to boil in my ears and cheeks. I turned round and said to her:

"I assure you, Fiametta, I do not ambition the honour of even being Sir Joseph Paulett's *poor* relation, as among our quarterings, such as they are, we certainly can't boast those of the Signora Fiametta, who figured at the Italian Opera about the third quarter of the last century."

I had now rivetted the hatred that had before been

so gratuitously bestowed upon me. Fiametta cast upon me one deadly look as she turned away without a word, and walked into the other room.

"Excuse me, my dear Miss Sedley," said the Duchess of Clapperclaw, holding her fan before her face as if much shocked, for English sympathy and support generally flows in an inverse ratio for the aggressor, and never for the injured; especially if they have such *manque de convenance* as to openly resent the injury, instead of resorting to the quiet and orthodox back-stabbing mode of retaliation, for the laws of society are the very antipodes of the game laws, and demand that all prey should be snared, as they grant no license for open warfare. "For," continued her Grace, "we all know Sir Joseph Paulett's origin, but he makes himself very useful, and therefore very popular; and depend upon it you will get the worst of it if you attack him."

"I don't want to attack him," said I; "but I think it was a piece of wanton cruelty and ill-breeding, especially in her own house, to make the coarse and unlady-like speech about me which she did just now in my hearing."

"But, my dear Miss Sedley, only think what you said to her."

"But I did not say it in *attack*, I said it in *retaliation*," persisted I.

"In—ah—that is a—I'm sure I think Miss Sedley was quite right. Ah—it wa—was confoundedly insolent in Fia Paulett. Duchess, pray present me," said the young gentleman with hay-coloured hair and evaporated eyes.

"Miss Sedley, my step-son, the Duke of Clapperclaw."

Our bows exchanged, he began, in the true national style—for most Englishmen's only idea of a compliment is to detract from some other woman *to* the

woman to whom they are speaking; but this no doubt arises from a thorough knowledge of their countrywomen, who, to do them justice, with very few exceptions, are the most envious and ill-natured in the world.

"Don't you think Fia Paulett deucedly gone off?" said he (for I'm sorry to say all the men called her Fia, and in return she made equally free with their Christian and surnames, always dispensing with the Mr., Lord, or Sir, as the case might be; and if there is one thing more degrading than another, in my old-fashioned opinion, it is to hear what *should* be a respectable girl talked of by every man as Georgy this, and Ciey that, like a race-horse, or an opera-dancer).

"No," said I; "I think she is quite as pretty as ever, and looking remarkably well to-night."

"Well a—come—a—that's devilish good of you."

"My sight *is* very good, and *there* the sole goodness lies, as it cannot detect faults where only beauty exists."

"I declare, C——," said my hay-coloured companion, turning to the high-bred looking man with the ribbon of the Garter, who had elicited Fiametta's speech about me, "that is a compliment quite in your way, for you have the knack of them; but 'pon my soul it was far more than Fia deserved, from the quarter it came."

"I can only say, Amen," replied Lord C——; "and never was so grateful for the correctness of my own vision as at the present moment. Miss Sedley," continued he, making me a very graceful bow, "I have some claim upon your indulgence for presenting myself to you; for I had the pleasure a few months ago of being the bearer of a packet to you from your sister, which I should have done myself the honour of conveying to you in person, but that I had to leave town for Vienna the very night of my arrival."

I thanked him for having so kindly troubled himself with so large a packet, but felt infinitely more grateful to him when he praised Grace, even to *my* heart's content, and then added: "As for de Maillepré, he's charming! I don't know a better fellow anywhere. His is one of those complete, nicely-balanced, and finely-blended characters in which there are no vacuums—a bright intelligence, in fact, of many constellations, without any misty nebulæ in the way of drawbacks; so that I think your sister has every chance of happiness; but," added he, with a smile, "there are other heroes of romance in the world, and I must not forget them. Allow me to ask how fare the loves of Glauber Rodolphus?"

"Oh!" laughed I, "they fare well, or rather have farewelled!" and I then gave him a full account of Mr. Perkins's capture and rescue, at which we were still laughing, when who should come up to speak to the Duchess of Clapperclaw but Lord Frederick Farnham. When he had reported himself to her as forthcoming for her ball on the 15th of May, I touched his arm with my fan, and putting out my hand, said:

"Naughty Lord Frederick! you forget your old plague! ungrateful Lord Frederick! not to remember the charitable mortal who came to your assistance the last (and I hope the first) time you showed the white feather, even of your aide-de-camp's hat, and fainted getting out of the carriage at the Palazzo Vascello, or as you profanely called it, the 'Old Ship!'"

"My dear Miss Miriam!" cried he, shaking both my hands, "I am so delighted to see you; how is your sister, how is Sir George, and how are Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett? for I need not ask how you are."

"All well, thank you, except dear Uncle Paulett, who will be in town at last, I hope next month, but who is

now in Paris, to have a cataract taken off of one of his eyes, by Müller, the great German oculist."

"In Paris! how came I to miss him there? for I only returned from Paris yesterday."

"Why, he was not to reach Paris till last Monday. But tell me, did you see anything of Mademoiselle de Guilleragues?"

"A great deal of her; and she is so happy! *hérissée de la vielle cour*, as she says herself; and every one so fond of her. As for the *Abbaye au Bois, she* is, with the Chateaubriand, and Gerard's picture of Corinne, at Cape Mecinas, and the blue *fauteuils*, part of the furniture; and Madame Récamier would not know herself without each and all of them. I must tell you a *mot* of hers, *qui faisait fureur à Paris*, for you know how *spirituelle* she is. One night Chateaubriand was staring at her, intently for which he apologized, by saying that she reminded him so strongly of a long lost friend. 'No apology, Monsieur,' said she, answering him in his own words, 'Il y a une vertu dans le regard d'un grand homme, et d'ailleurs vous avez dit aussi, que la meilleure partie du génie se compose de souvenirs.'"

"In bowing to these two charming and delicate compliments, Chateaubriand knocked down from a little *déjeúner* of four, an exquisite jewelled *Sévre* cup, and shivered it to atoms.

"'Never mind, it can't be helped,' said Madame Récamier, picking it up with a very rueful countenance, which she tried to cover with her peculiarly sweet smile.

"'Ah!' said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, turning to Chateaubriand, 'On voit bien, Monsieur, que Madame n'est pas '*Atala*,' car elle ne met pas son bonheur en *chaque tasse!*' (*chactas*)."

"Wasn't it neat?" said Lord Frederick.

"Charming!" said I, "only she and dear Uncle Pau-

lett, between their goodness, their sparkling and racy wit, and their perfect manners, spoil one for all the rest of the world, for one meets none like them."

"If we did, we should not value them so much," said Lord Frederick.

"I must not forget that '*chactas*' for De Maillepré," said Lord C——, "for it is the very best thing I have heard for a long time; sufficiently good to make the shades of Voltaire and Monsieur de Bièvre fight a duel, when its echoes reach the elysian fields, for neither the one, nor the other ever said anything better."

I perceived that Philip Vavasour was leaning against the opposite wall of the room, looking at me with a strange mixture of conflicting expressions in his face; but his eyes looked so fearfully handsome, and more than usually luminous, that I knew by those two infallible symptoms with him, that the demon, either of pride or jealousy, was at work. I looked at him, as much as to say, "Why then don't you come over, and join in our conversation?" But he turned away, I cannot exactly call it haughtily, for it was more with the pout of a spoilt child, and walked into the next room. Fiametta then sat down to the piano, at Lord Mountflummery's request; and after running over the keys, said to him, with an hysterical kind of laugh, loud enough for every one to hear:

"Is it to be an appropriate song?"

"Oh! to be sure," said he, "the more appropriate the better."

Whereupon she sang with the most pointed emphasis *at* him, which, thanks to his ignorance of Italian, did not penetrate, but told with most of those present.

"Ah! che Bruto Marito, per une Gentilezza Ragazza!"

"No, no! not that horrid thing!" cried Lady Paulett, trying to stop her: but in vain, for she would

not commute a single inuendo, but sang it out to the very last note.

Another young lady then sat down and "lifted up her voice," but whether it was English, Italian, French, German, or high Dutch, it was utterly impossible to ascertain, as she had one of those peculiarly English unpronouncing voices, which gave one the idea of her throat being lined with fleecy hosiery, and her mouth filled with pap.

"I forget, Miriam, whether you sing," said Lady Paulett, coming up to me.

"Sometimes."

"Pray let us have the *felicity* of hearing you," said Fiametta, with the same insufferably impertinent smile, that years before she had said "*you* going to dance, Mirry!"

And I fear I answered her now much in the same spirit, that I did *not* answer her then, as I very quietly said,

"Certainly, if you wish it;" and walked over to the instrument.

"Dear me," said she, as I tried a slight prelude, "I had no idea that you were that sort of player."

"What sort of player?"

"Why, scattering round brilliant harmonies along the keys, as carelessly as a husbandman scatters seed," said a well-known voice at my elbow. I turned to shake hands with Monsieur de Maillepré.

"How on earth did you know Monsieur de Maillepré?" said Fiametta.

"In a very ordinary and common-place manner," said I with a smile. "he will soon be my brother-in-law!"

"Grace going to marry Monsieur de Maillepré! one of the best *parties* in France, impossible!"

"J'espère bien que non, Mademoiselle," said he,

making her a profound bow, in answer to her well-bred speech; she now looked so thoroughly disconcerted that even I pitied her; and to cover her retreat, began "Voi che sapete"—but others were not so kind to her, for when I ceased there was a round of what I could not but think, as far as poor Fiametta was concerned, very cruel applause, which Lord C. added to by maliciously turning to her and saying

"At all events, the *poor* relation has a very *rich* voice; don't you think so, Miss Paulett?"

"Eh? poor relation—what's all this about?" said Sir Joseph, who generally poked his crooked nose into every *embarras*.

Lord C. still more maliciously gave him the desired explanation, affecting to think it a witty conceit of Fiametta's; but the father knew the child of his own training better, and dragging her away, said with an angry frown as they passed by me—

"You *are* so imprudent! Fia; that's not the way to humiliate the girl."

What more good advice and wise reproof he gave her I know not, for it was lost in air and distance; and I being again importuned to sing, had nothing to do but to obey, and sang that then comparatively new song of Moore's—

> "When first I met thee, warm and young,
> There shone such truth about thee,
> And on thy lip such promise hung,
> I did not dare to doubt thee."

When I ceased, Philip Vavasour was at my side.

"I never heard you sing so well, and that is saying a great deal," said he in a low voice. I was happy at that moment, and that always makes one look radiant; yet, still, as I raised my eyes to his, he looked too triumphant to satisfy the oneness of feeling that was

in my own heart; like the night of my childish triumph at the little theatre of ——, it seemed that his particular praise was only the echo of the general applause, and that had it been censure or silence instead, his pride would also have been displeased and silent. There is some French author who says that the *hoc erat in votis* will be the perpetual nightmare of all our illusions. True, true! still I was so happy, that I did not want anything to come after, so I said to him—

"Will you have the goodness to see whether the carriage is there?" and not waiting for his return, I wished Lady Paulett good night.

"Running away so soon," said she; "well I shall come and see you on our return; but we are going into Derbyshire the day after to-morrow for six weeks, and then you will tell me all about how you came to be with your father?"

I thought it was time for her to ask, yet still I would rather she had not done so at all. The Duchess of Clapperclaw again heaved in her chair, and said—

"Mind you come and see me when you return to town. I like your singing prodigiously; hear every note; expression in singing, what proper emphases are in reading. English girls in general sing like machines; rather hear a barrel-organ any day; does grind the right tune at all events. Good night; happy to have met you; dance for me some day, I know, when we're alone."

"To a barrel-organ like a monkey," thought I, as I curtsied my adieux.

"Good night," cried little Lord Catagraph, starting up, and putting out his poor little emaciated hand; "but I don't now quite understand what a weeping birch is."

"Why, I'm afraid it must be seen and felt before it can be understood; but I'm sure you are too good a

boy to require a more intimate acquaintance with birch."

"Am I, Miss Grey?" asked he, appealing to the pretty governess.

"Sometimes; no one is always good."

"Aint they? then what's the use of your being always with me?"

"I'm sure I don't very well know," said poor Miss Grey, who no doubt had often before propounded the same question to herself, without being able to obtain a solution of it; but as she had stood up at my approach, I now begged she would sit down, shook hands with her, and wished her good night. Monsieur de Maillepré was about to offer me his arm; but seeing Mr. Philip Vavasour advancing up the second room, he said, with that tact which few Frenchmen are without—

"I was going to offer my services; but as here is a more worthy cavalier, I will resign in his favour, as I promised to sing a duet with Miss Paulett."

Philip pressed my arm lightly to his side all the way down stairs, and I felt his heart beating tumultuously; but he said nothing, till he put me into the carriage, when he said, in a low concentrated voice, as he pressed my hand in his—

"Miriam, you *must* let me see you to-morrow."

The word *must* jarred disagreeably on my ear; I should have preferred *do*. To say the least of it, it was somewhat too soon for such candid tyranny; but in slamming to, the carriage door, the *must* seemed pulverized; and as I looked at the graceful figure, and saw the beautiful face of him who had uttered it gazing at the carriage till it turned the corner, I'm afraid I forgot the *word*, and only remembered the *look!*

CHAPTER XI.

THE morning after I had been at the Pauletts', my poor father had had such a bad night that he begged to be left, that he might try and sleep, so that I should be (as I thought) alone to receive Philip if he came. I had a sort of fever on the spirits that would neither allow me to read, write, work, nor sit still; I could do nothing but walk up and down—I don't know that I was exactly happy; no, I could not have been so; for real happiness is a satisfied feeling, and all satisfied feelings are calm. The conflict is excitement, but after the victory comes peace! Whatever it was, like the shadowy beatitudes of an opium elysium, I would not then have exchanged it for the wisest of realities, though like Manfred, I might have invoked Philosophy!

> "If that I did not know philosophy
> To be of all our vanities the motliest,
> The merest word that ever fool'd the ear
> From out the schoolman's jargon."

I opened the Bible. It is a strange, mysterious fact, that one scarcely ever does so at random, let one's sorrow, or one's perplexity, or even one's joy, which is more rare, be of what nature it will, but the verse one's eye falls upon seems the exact index of our own individual position, it would almost make one think

that one's guardian angel invisibly turns the leaves; at all events the one now before me was:

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

And I wondered if Philip Vavasour would serve seven years for the love he had for me? Seven years! those were in the old patriarchal times, when men's lives were of a patriarchal length. What man's love lasts seven years now? unless, indeed, it be his self-love. Besides, how did I know that he loved me at all? He certainly had called me "dear Miriam" the night before, but that, perhaps, was only impertinence from my being alone and having no mother, and almost no father; if so, instead of being glad, I ought to have resented it. He also had said very authoritatively that "I must" see him to-day. That *was* impertinent, and still I had not resented it. Decidedly there was something wrong somewhere. While I was still pondering on these things, I was startled by a sharp knock at the hall door. I knew it was not Philip Vavasour's knock; and I had my hand on the bell, to tell Maurice that I could not see any stranger, when unannounced, who should walk into the room but Sir Joseph Paulett. In every house he infested he was generally as welcome as the tax-gatherer; but at this particular moment he actually seemed to me a sort of imbodied income-tax, his nose making the likeness to that crooked measure still stronger. After placing his hat, cane, and gloves on the table, with that perfect *chez soi* air which he always diffused about himself in every house that was *not* his own, he advanced towards me; and instead of shaking hands, which was the very extreme of any outward and visible cloak of dislike that had ever existed between us, he seized me by both elbows, and was about to brand me with a kiss! I drew back indignantly, and said:

"Really, Sir Joseph, as you never even took the liberty of kissing me when I was a child, I beg you will not make so strange a mistake as to do so now."

"Ahem! ahem!" said he, lifting up the skirts of his coat and flinging himself into a chair, pocketing the rebuff as coolly as if it had been his handkerchief; for rebuffs are nothing when one's used to them—"the fact is, I came to speak to you on a matter of business. Fia tells me that Grace is going to marry Monsieur de Maillepré, devilish good match for her, one of the best *parties* in France. Now, my dear, your father, being evidently in no state to look after settlements, and all that sort of thing, I shall be very happy to act as her father on this occasion, and also to give her away."

"Thank you," said I, suddenly falling three degrees below zero, "but you seem to forget that though my poor father's health is now, unfortunately, so enfeebled, yet dear Uncle Paulett, who has been more than a father to us all our lives, will certainly not desert us now; and I am very sure, that sincerely as Grace is attached to Monsieur de Maillepré, she would rather not marry him, than that any one but Uncle Paulett should give her away."

"Oh! well, that is all very well about the giving away; but with regard to the settlements, your uncle not being here, I am willing to see that they are all properly arranged, and that De Maillepré don't take advantage of her being I may say, an orphan."

A slight flush at this speech I could not repress, but I said calmly: "Thank you, but Grace's being penniless, will considerably simplify the settlements, and I have too good an opinion of Monsieur de Maillepré's honesty, (for I hate the word honour, so long as it has been used as a mask for every villainy among *soi-disant* gentlemen!) that I am very certain, his first care will be to make every provision for the woman who is to

share his name, and therefore ought to share his fortunes; but above all, for the woman who may be the mother of his children; but even should he from any over-sight, (for I am very sure it would not be from any worse fault,) omit to do so. The *Code Napoléon* differs widely from the English Nab-code; the first making every provision for the protection and redress of women, and the latter affording only every facility for defrauding them, and every impunity for ill-treating them."

"Oh! well, have it your own way; I wash my hands of it," said Don José, hastily buttoning up his surtout to the throat, giving the padding on his chest a couple of taps, and reaching over for his gloves, preparatory to his taking his departure; "all I know is, that I'm devilish glad I broke off that foolish affair between Fia and Philip Vavasour, for I saw Barnavelt, Dingly Vavasour's solicitor yesterday, and he tells me his affairs are in a very ticklish state."

I thought if they were in no more danger than Fiametta had been of marrying his nephew, they did not run any great risk; still, I felt an uncomfortable feel on Philip's account, for I already knew him too well not to be aware that the loss of fortune and station would be to him the loss of happiness, while, on the other hand, I was attacked with that peculiar species of imbecility, then rife among young ladies in their teens, but which in these wiser and more advanced times is happily as completely exploded as the ravages of the small pox; I mean those verdant hallucinations about living upon love, music, moonlight, and other light food, for people were primitive and plebeian in their ideas then, and all they aspired to was, to realize the vulgar saying of having enough "to make the pot boil;" but in these more refined times, every young lady emulating every young gentleman, has a much more extensive (kitchen) range of ideas, in which

each separate stewpan requir
love runs the risk of being p
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Don José having arranged
put on his hat in servile in
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and announced his departur
where he kindly looked in
time, and arranged the pro
the day, and the dinners fo
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the young duke, who was
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only fit for great people, t
and *all-grasping* for the hu
life; and as for private and
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Mine he had so completely
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"Good heavens!" said he
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"Nothing," said I, dryi
through my tears, "only I
a visit from Sir Joseph Paul
has the happy knack of inv
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"Miriam," cried he, flin
"give me this little hand, an
you, at least not with impun

"But this little hand is empty," I said, shaking my head mournfully, "and when that is the case, insult always finds room to discharge her quiver."

"Answer me, Miriam—have I deceived myself? for it sometimes happens, that one mistakes the echoes of one's own heart for the beatings of another; but do you love me? or can you love me?" and as he spoke, he grasped my hands so tightly, and looked into my eyes with a sort of magnetic omnipotence, that seemed to uproot my very soul.

"Philip, you frighten me," said I, faintly, clinging to the arm of the sofa, against which we were standing.

"I frighten you! My God! and that is your only return for so much love!" said he, bitterly, suddenly relaxing his grasp of my hands, as he turned to the chimney-piece, and leaning both his elbows on it, buried his face in his hands.

"You think you love me, perhaps," said I, timidly, "but you know but little of me yet; and it is dangerous to fancy that we love those we don't know, lest, when we do know them, we should, too late, execrate our own idolatry, and be the first to trample in the dust the false divinity we had set up; finding, like the Athenians, that the chief altar in our hearts was still awaiting the Unknown God!"

"Oh, Miriam! you talk of love with a cold, calm heart at ease, as if it were a geometrical puzzle, to be sought, and studied, and pondered over, till every curious zigzag could be dove-tailed into suitable affinities, upon scientific principles; but it is not that—oh! no, it is not that—but the only spark of sacred fire which our dull weight of human clay can neither dim nor extinguish. Miriam," continued he, passionately, again kneeling before me, and taking my hands in his, as he looked with tearful eyes into my face, "I don't even ask you to love me—only let me love you."

"I see," said I, trying to smile, for I was very near making a fool of myself, and telling him that he need not beg me to do what I had already done, "you only want to bring this spark of sacred fire, which you say is burning so brightly in your heart, and, like an incendiary, light up mine with it, till there is no distinguishing our respective property in this general conflagration."

"Yes, yes—that is what I want; and the sooner it is done the better," said he, flinging his arms round me, and pressing me to his heart.

"Philip," said I, as soon as I could disengage myself from him, "sit down beside me, and let us talk rationally, if possible. I hate affectation; and after allowing you to kiss me, I'm not going to calumniate myself by not owning that I love you; but—"

"Ah! that horrid, marble word! it makes even your mouth ugly, I must kiss it off."

"And you must listen to the charmer, charm she never so wisely. When I say that I love you, I should rather say that I could love you, deeply, devotedly—perhaps even as madly as you would like, if your moral qualities gave me warrant for so doing; but I frankly tell you, that mine is a high, and therefore a very unworldly standard, and it would not be in my nature to love what fell far short of it; for, young as I am, I build no castles in the air—esteem Christian, not conventional esteem, is the only rock upon which I could ever build my love, since I require a fragment of this rock even to found my friendship upon; and, recollect, love with us is not the hot spark it is with men, as ready to fall on one object as on another; but it is either the rock a-head on which we founder, in life's stormy sea, or else the bright beacon, on that rock, to guide us safely through all danger. The aromatic pine and the fragrant myrtle, which Love lights up upon the heights of his own southern latitudes, shed a far

wider and intenser, but more transient blaze; but Principle is the only naptha whose steady light may be depended upon, through storm and calm, as the permanent pharos of a whole life."

"Then you think me thoroughly worthless and unprincipled!" interrupted he, more with the flash of wounded pride than the sorrow of wounded affection.

"Scarcely, when I have told you how well I could love you, and yet on what my love depended; but, I should like to be sure that you possessed those qualities before I ran so fearful a risk, as the happiness of my whole life, for it is not as if men ever tried even to rescue a raft from what they have wrecked; but no, like children of a smaller growth the toy once broken becomes worthless in their eyes—'the world' is still 'all before them where to choose;' but a woman has no world beyond her own home, and when hymen dashes about the household gods in any of his conjugal whirlwinds, he takes care to pulverise the wife's heart well first—to break their fall, so that the husbands share of them may not be so much mutilated but what they can be very easily put together again."

"Ah! this is my mother's doing. I see how completely she has poisoned you against me."

"Oh! Philip, Philip! that speech shows how little you know your mother; but be just, recollect what your father was and what your mother is, and you will not wonder that I should look before I leap. I make every allowance for your way of viewing this vital subject, all your life unnaturally estranged from that mother, and educated at an English public school where the heavy stone of ridicule and selfishness is rolled over the well of natural affections that is to be found more or less deep in every heart, and where the phosphoric light of intellect is alone tended; while the real lamp of life, the *moral qualities*, are either totally neglected, or worse still, utterly perverted by being taught

to think that vice is not only a pardonable weakness, but an orthodox necessity in men, and when punished should only be so in the other sex—just as there are always scapegoats to receive his floggings when the little Lamra of Thibet commits any heinous offence. It is true, that that old fashioned code, the laws of God, enjoin to men certain duties towards their wives, and the marriage ceremony goes through the pleasant farce of repeating these; but as our every law, especially those relative to the English slave-trade of women, is framed by and for mammon; there is nothing for an outraged wife but to sit like Marius amid the ruins of her own heart, only woe betide her if, when lacerated beneath their crash, the cry of her languish penetrates beyond the sphere of her destruction.

"Philip, every law respecting marriage, as it now exists, is wrong, rotten, and monstrous, and every woman of principle, before she submits to be branded for life at the matrimonial gallies, and have her chains locked on, should look well to the character of the man with whom she is to be coupled; for in him *individually* must be her only hope, as let her ill treatment be of ever so black and barbaric a dye, neither the laws of our much boasted constitution, nor the equally dry-rotted laws of society, afford her the slightest protection or redress. And I have a notion that the man who is not a good son cannot be a good husband, or indeed good in any relationship of life. The greatest monster I ever heard of, was one, who, to the world, passed for a paragon, because he spent his life in servilely flattering a rich and vicious old mother, who had an unentailed estate, till he won the prize, and to continue this charming farce of filial affection (for he was fond of theatricals,) he told eulogistic lies in marble of her after she had gone to her fearful account. But I don't mean dramatic effects, or political forms and ceremonies, I mean a son whose love for his mother should be

'spread out over his heart like a vesture,' to borrow the beautiful language of Scripture, which so describes God as spreading out the heavens—and next to that heaven, believe me, Philip, there is none to which a man can look up to more wisely, or more blessedly, than to that of a mother's love."

"Miriam," said he, leaning his face against mine, while I felt his hot tears on my cheek; "do you remember once, when you were a child, and I was scarcely more, your asking me to let you help me to love my mother? oh! help me to do so now, and I will be all and everything you wish—you have my heart and soul, keep them, and it will be your fault if they go wrong; but do not—do not trifle with a desperate and irresponsible being; for the love I feel for you, Miriam, is a parched insanity that has drained the last drop of reason; I am giddily tottering upon the brink of a precipice, on one side which, lies the paradise of love, bounded by hope's horizon of bright future years, and on the other, an unfathomable abyss of destruction and despair. Mercy, mercy! Miriam! and do not push me in."

"Philip," said I, imprinting a kiss upon his burning forehead, "again I say you frighten me; you do indeed want some one to take care of you: I will be that one—here is my hand, and in it my heart; use it gently, for I tell you honestly, half what your mother endured would break it."

"Break it, Miriam, my own—my angel! if I break it it must be with such a weight of love as no one heart was ever yet called upon to bear!" and he folded me to his bosom, and for some seconds neither of us spoke. The sound of footsteps on the stairs made me start from him; in doing so, the very fragile chain that held poor Bloom's little dove, that I always wore in my bosom, caught in the pin of his neck-handkerchief and broke! I uttered a faint cry.

"What's the matter, love?"

"Oh, what a fatal omen!" said I, taking up the broken chain."

"For me, then, if you will be so superstitious; for see, the dove remains with you, like a sensible happy bird as it is, and the broken links with me."

"Oh, Philip," said I, suddenly, "how foolish we are, and how wrong I am; we have settled all this without ever remembering that dear Mrs. Vavasour, and Uncle Paulett, or poor papa, and your formidable Uncle Dingly, were in the world; or, in short, that any one was, but ourselves."

"Nor are there," said he, seating himself beside me, and again drawing me towards him; "we dont want any one else in the world; do we, Mirry? my own Mirry! my little wife!"

"But, Philip—"

"But Mirry—"

"No; but listen to me. You'll ask your mother first, wont you? and, kind as she is, she may not like it; for I have nothing. And then your terrible Uncle Dingly. Oh, I'm sure he'll never give his consent!"

"We don't want his consent."

"Oh, but dear Philip, you don't suppose that I'd be so selfish as to let you blight all your worldly prospects by marrying me without it?"

"Oh, no; I shan't do that."

"But how can you help it, if you marry me either without or against his consent? and from all I have always heard of his mercenary and worldly character, you'll have I'm certain to do one or the other."

Philip made no answer; but, putting his arm round my waist, and his lips close to my ear, he whispered—

"Miriam, my own Miriam, we will be privately married here, at St. George's, at eight o'clock to-morrow morning."

"No, Philip, we will *not*," said I, disengaging myself from him.

"But Mirry, dear Mirry, listen to reason."

"It is precisely to her that I am listening."

"Surely, you yourself were the first to say, that you would not let me risk my worldly prospects in marrying you."

"Nor will I."

"But, dearest love, as you most truly said, my Uncle Dingly is much too mercenary a beast to give his consent."

"Take care, I did not say *beast;* but *you* know him better than I do; and I should not like to marry into a family where there was even *one* beast, and only once removed from my husband, for I have terrible faith in blood; it seldom belies itself."

"Then you persist," said he gloomily, almost sullenly, "in risking my worldly interest with my uncle?"

"Far from it; I will not even risk what you seem to set no store by, but what is dearer to me even than your worldly prospects."

"What do you mean?"

"Your honour."

"My honour! how can that be compromised by secretly marrying the woman I love, to avoid an open rupture with a damnable uncle?"

"I am sorry that you cannot perceive how; that is, I am more than sorry that you should so completely separate the honour of one you would make your wife from your own. I should have thought that they ought to have been *one*."

"But, dearest Miriam, your honour cannot be compromised, either, by making any sacrifice for your husband."

"Softly, I know; that is the ONE article of man's creed. But you are not my husband yet; and since the world began, there are too many instances on record of men's terrible lack, not only of generosity,

but of gratitude and common justice, in being the very first to upbraid the slightest direlection from duty of which they themselves have been at once the cause and the effect; for it is so convenient to them to palliate all future wrong in themselves, by a scrupulously severe retrospective verdict upon the slightest wavering from the sternest path of duty in their wives. 'You deceived or disobliged your father, mother, or guardian for me; *ergo*, you would be quite capable of deceiving me; at all events, it suits me to say so,' is the noble-minded tone of marital logic; and knowing this, every woman is a fool who lets the sophistry of a lover's 'then you don't care for me,' entrap her into deviating one hair's breadth from the straight line, knowing, from the recorded experience of six thousand years, how seldom, if ever, men are true to them, women should at least be so to themselves; but what between the superabundance of silliness on the one side, and the large mass of women on the other, whom men have made as vicious and heartless as themselves, I fear it will be long—very long, before they are."

"Good heavens, Miriam! you don't think I could ever be such a dastardly wretch, as at any future time to upbraid you with deceiving the whole world, had you done so to prove your love for *me*?"

"No, I don't think you are *now*; and I'm sure *you* don't think you ever would be. But the very fear a woman feels at these clandestine engagements, is nature prophecying in her heart; and if she heed not, her present warning, when the future arrives, that heart may be a wilderness, and despair the only voice crying in it. You may think all this caution precocious in a girl of my age: but recollect, Philip, I have not been brought up by easy stages, like other girls, but cradled in a storm, as it were, from my earliest infancy. Look at the flowers of the field, or those of the garden; all nature teaches the same lesson: the leaves which the

sunbeam expands gradually and genially, the blast opens suddenly and rudely; and once opened, they must receive such torrents of light as heaven sends them. I do not—I cannot, like most girls, accept it in blind credence as a fact, that every man is my superior; but even were it so intellectually—which I have not yet found—I have little or no veneration for mere intellectual supremacy. Having been taught by precept, but still more by the only real teaching, that of example, to feel—nay to religiously believe, that one grain of moral worth in the scale of God's justice, and in utility to man, outweighs a whole mountain of mere intellect; though I am far from under-rating intellect, as I look upon it to be the sun of the moral world; but what is the use of the brightest and most ardent sun, but to engender pestilence and death, if it only shines upon barren plains or immuned masses? For the gem must first exist in the mine, and the fruit on the tree, before the great luminary can impart brilliancy to the one, or flavour to the other. Besides, I have heard all your mother's sad, sad history; and oh! there is a truer and deeper, if a more terrible, knowledge to be gained from the study of the incarnate realities of *one* broken heart, than from the simulachrum teaching of a thousand schools.

"Trust me, Philip, I know you better than you know yourself. Do not urge me to do that which, when you look back upon it, you will view in a very different light from that which the glow of your present feelings sheds upon it. Surely, to risk so much of my future peace for a momentary gratification to yourself, is purchasing it at too great a sacrifice of me."

He had been leaning on the mantel-piece, apparently listening to me, but I had no sooner ceased speaking, than he seized both my hands so violently that he hurt them; and flinging himself at my feet, said:

"Miriam, answer me one question; do you, or do you not love me?"

"Philip, you know that I do."

"I know no such thing; how should I know it?"

"If you do not believe me, there is no use in my repeating what I was, perhaps, foolish ever to have acknowledged," rejoined I, forcibly withdrawing my hands from his grasp.

"Pshaw! words — mere words! the most useless things on earth," he cried, breaking from me, and pacing up and down the room.

"I fear so," sighed I.

"Love!—not you—the woman that loves don't calculate; the woman that loves don't reason; the woman that loves don't use the word sacrifice, for she don't know what it means; the woman that loves don't hesitate. No, she consents to anything and everything her lover wishes."

"Then," said I coldly, almost haughtily, "at that rate, I certainly do not love,"

"Oh! now you can speak the plain, unvarnished truth; and coin your strong vacillations into insulting fiats," sneered he bitterly. "At all events," added he, seizing his hat, and hastily putting on his gloves, while his fingers trembled with passion, "I thank you, Miss Sedley, for your tardy candour; better late than never."

His mother's words rang in my ears, like a knell, "*never marry a man, the very nature of whose love for you, you perceive to be selfishness.*"

I covered my face with my hands, and leaning on the arm of the sofa, I burst into tears.

"Miriam, I am mad! but you have made me so. Only unsay those horrible words, that you do not love me, which are eating into my very soul like fire, and scathing my brain till I feel it cracking and crumbling into frenzy," cried he, returning from the door, and

flinging his hat upon the table, as he again knelt down, and tried to force my hands from before my face.

"Ah! Philip, it is *you* who do not love me; if you did, you would, at least, have some feeling for me—some respect for yourself."

"Forgive me, Miriam, my own Miriam! yes, mine! I may say mine; you *will* be mine—wont you?" said he, whispering the words into my ear, and emphasizing each, with a kiss.

I made no answer, for my heart felt as if it would break; what had become of all my fine theories, my mathematical rules for never loving where I could not esteem; to esteem violence, selfishness, and want of principle, was impossible; and it *was* unprincipled, cruelly unprincipled, to wish me, for the gratification of his own immediate feelings, to become an embodied falsehood, and not only to deceive all whom I dearly loved, but him whom I was at least bound to obey; to place me in a false and a compromising position. Surely a man of real honour and delicacy would have done everything to save me from any more of these equivocal trials, for had I not had enough of them already? No, it was out of all reason that I could approve, much less admire such conduct. And yet I loved him! oh, yes, I loved him! When the true faith of reason deserts the heart, it becomes superstitious, I suppose it was to be; for since the world was made, has not love been the grave of reason, and marriage its epitaph? making a pompous eulogium on it when it was too late!

The shades of evening were beginning to fall; for some minutes neither of us spoke; the tempest that had raged in his heart, and swept ruthlessly over mine, till it had beaten it down to the very earth, was spent, and both were hushed in that deep dreamy calm of love, which is the anodyne of its own fever, but which

we feel cannot last, and th
faintest breath that may disso
the first to break it:

"Plague take the hours,"
head, and looking towards
once can't they stand still? I
Miriam," cried he, straining
daring to utter the words ou
time I ask it; promise that y
row morning at eight, or if y
see me again—at least as yo
I cannot, go on in this wa
right to prevent all the worl
for my Uncle Dingly may liv

"And for the short space
"you would condemn me to
and real anguish. Oh! Phi
own heart before you would b

"Then you refuse?" said
folding his arms.

"I do," said I, in a low, b
not the courage to raise my e
next moment the door was sl
that shook the whole room,
upon my seat. I looked up—
cally I darted a step or two f
with my arms out, as if I
brought him back; but tak
own folly, I tottered back,
beside the sofa, and burst i
tears. He had left his hand
buried my face in it, and the
always lies upon a glove, a h
garment of its master's or mi
out, the ashes were desolately
the small, dim, old, oil stree
their feeble flickering rays wer

shadows along the gloomy walls. Oh! when one is writhing in the concrete agonies of despair, one feels almost grateful to silent walls, and insentient things, for the decent seeming of their sympathetic desolation. But my tears soon ceased to flow, for after the first hot gush of agony in a great grief, comes that sudden winter of the heart, which freezes up all its fountains into a fictitious hardness, and enables it to bear for a time the greatest weight of misery, while all minor ones glide unfelt over its congealed surface. I don't know how long I had remained in this state of petrifaction, when I heard my father's bed-room door open. I started to my feet, and as the feeble attenuated rays of the street-lamp fell upon his white hair and pale face, it would not have required much imagination to have taken him for a messenger from the other world; but the last bell of the general-postman was pealing through the dingy street, and a phantom visitor would hardly have been so loudly and corporeally announced.

"Mirry, darling, are you there?" said he. I went over, and took his hand. "Are you alone, my child?"

"*Alone!* indeed, Father!"

CHAPTER XII.

For a whole week, I hoped to receive some tidings of Philip—if only one line of contrition for his injustice, and his selfishness—but none came; the second week the terrible conflicts of Love's fearful bane were beginning to yield to the antidotes of reason and reflection; it was evident he had no *real* love for me; and in this conviction it was that my radical cure was to be found; for, as in the physical world, where a poison grows, its antidote generally springs up near—so had Providence mercifully, in bestowing upon me a susceptibility to kindness, almost amounting to weakness, at the same time armed me with a contempt for, and resistance of injustice, and an incapability of caring for those who did not care for me; which, if not in itself amounting to firmness, at least made a most efficient substitute for it. After some insane out-gushings of despair and anguish at seeing this first, and so recently erected, idol, already shivered at life's very threshold, I began to turn round in the desolate and desecrated temple of my own heart, and to prostrate myself in the penitent spirit of submission to the inscrutable will of the only true God, who even when we offer up the incense of our gratitude through the blessings he has bestowed upon us, often removes them beyond our reach, as if to

make us feel that our bare, bleeding, ravaged heart, unbribed by a single ray of earthly hope, was the only sacrifice whose unleavened sincerity He was satisfied with. Oh! happy they, the quick of faith, who do not require too many judgments to convert them into his Apostles, but who can, like Paul, from their first terrible overthrow, leave their sins in the dust, and "Arise, and go to their Father!"

My whole life, as far as it had gone, had been unlike other lives: surrounded by false ties and spurious authority, for good as well as for evil—lavishing (with most just cause it is true) the warm, deep, venerating, love of filial affection—upon one who was *not* my Father—and giving him who *was* all indeed that I had to give: duty, and attention—the pale reflections of this glowing-sun. When all I clung to failed me, this deep conviction alone of being ill-fated, acted as a magnetic rock to misfortune; and already I felt sure that had I been a branch of ivy, and with more prudence than ever yet lurked in leaf or sage, had selected a sturdy oak, instead of a crumbling wall, round which to twine; the axe would have been laid to the oak the very next day after our partnership—while the crazy wall would have weathered, through long years, many a natural storm. What rivetted this notion in my mind was, that although the advantageous and disadvantageous circumstances attending Grace and me had hitherto been precisely the same,—yet what a different horizon the future seemed to gild for her; M. de Maillepré was all that the most devoted Love could dream—all that the most delicate conscience could exact of high and chivalric honour.

The untried wise, and the untemptedly virtuous, will tell us that conduct is fate, and so it is to a certain degree; but our real fate is a high mystery, quite independent of our conduct, the proof of which is, that to some these said *parcæ* are indulgent and benign

mothers, weaving for their web of life one fair even tissue, wherein the golden threads of pleasure are so closely blent with the silken warp of duty, that they are *one*, and for such to enjoy, is to obey; while to others, they are fierce step-mothers, turning their victims out in a storm, just where the cross roads of life meet, that of duty being filled with nettles, brambles, and sharp pointed stones, and that of inclination being fair and smooth at the onset, but with a dark whirlpool at the end of it, which must engulf all who travel by it. "Then choose the path of duty!" thunders the golden tissued moralist, from his easy chair. Good Sir, we hope to do so. But mercy, if not pity, when in our rugged path a moan escapes us, and we leave the ensanguined traces of our lacerated footsteps on the world.

I was sitting one cold grey morning, such as we often have in England towards the end of April, up in my room, "communing with my own heart," and trying to be still, when a very gentle knock came to the door; it was Nelly, who said:

"I beg your pardon, Miss, but don't you think the masther is slaping a long time?"

"You know he don't like being disturbed till he rings. But what o'clock is it?"

"A quarter to two, Miss."

"Then, indeed, it is time he was called."

Not without a sharp twinge of self-reproach, at having let two hours beyond the usual time of my going into my father's room elapse, did I now go down stairs, followed by Nelly. I knocked gently at his door; no answer. "May I come in, dear papa?" still no answer.

"You'd better go in, Miss," said Nelly, faintly; "or no, maybe its I that had better go fust."

"Good gracious! Nelly, how pale you look—like death!"

"Like enough, darlint; shure we must all die wancet. Stay here, there's a good child."

"Oh no!" said, I bursting into tears, "I see it all in your face. Why should I stay here if he's gone!"

"Hush!" said Nelly, softly opening the door. There was no mistaking the silence; there is but one such silence, that of Death! Where he is, the very air dies, too. Nelly walked on tiptoe to the window, and slowly and noiselessly opened a bit of the shutter. I stood by the bed-side, trembling. I could neither speak nor put aside the curtain. When Nelly did so, I said, with that self-delusion that we know to be a mockery, and yet cling to:

"Oh! Nelly, he is only asleep."

"He is, darlint," said Nelly, falling upon her knees, and clasping her hands in prayer, as she raised her streaming eyes to Heaven; "the best of slapes, sure, that knows neither bad dhrames nor sorrow at waking. Knale down, darlint, and thank God that his sowl's in glory! and dat it's both fader and moder you have now among the angels to look afther you; and you, dat was de best of good childer to him, tink of dat, alannah! it's laid up for you above, for sure wasn't dat de last thought he took to Heaven of you."

"Oh, no; no, Nelly; the worst. I did not love him as I ought. Two hours sooner I might, perhaps, have had his last blessing," said I, in a passion of tears, pressing my burning lips to his icy forehead.

"Oh, fie! Miss Miriam, to be saying what's not thrue at such a moment. Wasn't he always saying dat a better child never breathed de breath of life; and as for hish blessing, God rest hish sowl! don't you know dat he'sh gone to where blesshings ish plinty; which dare far from being in dis cowld dirty clod of a world; and for all he washn't a Catholic, more's de pity, yet de Lord forgive me, if Fader O'Toole shwore it on hish own breviary, dat belonged to Shaint Patrick, I cudn't belave dat de poor mashter wouldn't get to Heaven some how, if it's only on de echo of de Paters

and Aves I've said over him myself; and sure wancet dere, he can take his choiche of de blesshings, and it wud be odd indade if he didn't send you, and poor Miss Grace de very best."

Alas! alas! for our poor wavering wayward hearts, that never know how much they value anything till they lose it! I often think that the punishment of the most wicked after death will be to look back upon the time they have lost, and the evil they have committed, without the power of regaining the one, or atoning for the other; in short, a sort of spiritual catalepsy, wherein the torture of acute feeling is imbedded in the despond of an impossibility of action. As I now gazed upon the calm happy face of my poor father (for the Angel of Death in emancipating his spirit seemed to have annihilated those dark twins of earth, Sin and Sorrow, and to have embalmed the unconscious clay in eternal rest,) I felt all the love I *should* have had for him through life, but had not had; crowd in a mighty whirlpool round my heart till it was well nigh breaking—and what, perhaps, contributed to this, though I was unconscious of it at the time, was the tumultuous rushing of many dammed up griefs into this one great legitimate channel. With that refinement of self torture, which is the relentless discipline of affliction, I now recalled every kind word and look that he had ever given me, and indeed he had never given me any other. I also magnified my most trifling omissions towards him into the most deadly and unpardonable crimes, especially the two hours which I had lost in coming to him that morning. Oh! there was something horrible in the idea of his having been left to die alone. I almost fancied I was a parricide, and loudly accused myself of being such, as I frantically implored the forgiveness of his beatified spirit while I knelt beside its late but now deserted habitation!

Oh, yes; there I knelt, inscribing in the hot agony of a riven heart the universal epitaph of every earthly blessing—

"Too late found, too soon lost!"

Poor Nelly, who had all the considerate tact of real feeling, and therefore knew, that to attempt suddenly and clumsily, to check a violent outburst of grief, is only to augment it, allowed me for more than an hour, to give mine vent; and then gently, but forcibly raising my head from off my poor father's cold hand upon which it was leaning, she lifted me up and seated me on her lap, as if I had still been a child; and my face falling upon her shoulder, where its childish griefs had so often rested before, she said to me in a low voice, while patting my back as if hushing an infant to sleep:

"Hush! now my own good child, don't be afther troubling the poor masther's sowl in its glory! don't you remember, darlint, how Sur George, God bless him! whin you were a little ting, always had your beautiful New Years' Gifts laid on your pillow in the night that you might see them the fust thing in the morning, and wake up glad; well now shure its just the same thing wid our Heavenly Father, whin he takes a sowl in slape, he manes it as the greatest of all blessings—that it may wake in Heaven to iverlasting joy and gladness, wid sorrow a taste of this dirty world hanging about it, which it cudn't but have, shure if it was waking whin it left it. Besides, isn't there Sur George, yer rael father you may say, left? weirsthrew! what wud you have done if it had been him? whereas, the poor masther, God rest his sowl! is gone to where ivery blessing is in schtore for him; while here, barring yourself, sorrow a wun he had that I cud see, and Miss Mirry, darlint, theres a dale to do, and you are not the wun to turn your back upon what must and ought to

be done, aven if its stuck as full of spikes as a harrow, which indade for de matter of dat, most duties is in dis world.

"Fust, you'll have to write a line down to Brookshe's Cloob House, to tell Mishter Tom what has happened; for he must see to de funeral; and den I'm thinking though he is your cousin, and old enough to be your ancessther, to say nothing of his being ugly enough to purtect Vanus herself; yet it wudn't do for the likes of you, to be in a house alone wid a bachelor however ould and ugly; for you see its de ears dat sets de tongues wagging in dis world, and de eyes has nothing to do wid it; and even whin dey have, shure dere niver belaved aginst de ears and de tongue. It's mighty unlucky dat naither Sur George, nor Mrs. Vavasour, or aven Mrs. Marley, or Miss Paulett itself, shud be in it just now; for my place is no place to take you to aither, though av coorse I cud stow Jiffs away aisy enough. So Miss Mirry, darlint, you'll have to write to some of de quality to recave you, till Sur George, or Mrs. Vavasour, dat you do be expicting now ivery day arrive, and its glad dey ought to be to get you."

Nelly had touched the right chord. I saw the necessity of rousing myself. But who could I write to? I did not know enough of Lady Plantagenet; Mrs. and Miss Waltham were unfortunately at Hastings; and even Lady Paulett, disagreeable as it would have been to me to crave their hospitality, was out of town. Three guineas was all the money I possessed in the world; and I certainly would not have accepted, much less have asked, any from Tom Lutron; I would not even write to him, as Nelly told me to do, but told Maurice to seek him at his different haunts, and tell him. In the midst of my painful perplexity, I suddenly remembered that my cousin, Mrs. Penrose, lived in Upper Brook Street, and though I had never seen her, I thought that, after my poor father's volun-

tary restitution of her alienated property, she would not surely at such a time refuse to give his child a few days' shelter.

I sat down, and, as well as my tears would let me, I wrote her a short note, telling her what had happened, and making my request. With this Dowling was despatched, and Nelly, locking the bed-room door, and putting the key into her pocket, made me lie down on the sofa. I obeyed her tacitly in all things: it was the only proof I had it in my power to give her of my gratitude for her unwearying and efficient kindness. She sat at my feet, rubbing them; at length my sobs became more sudden, but less frequent, till, like the disciples, I slept for sorrow—I cannot tell how long; but I was roused by Maurice coming into the room, though he did so very gently, and laid the morning papers on the table.

"Well?" said I, starting up, and leaning on my elbow; this was all I could say; but he understood that I wanted to hear the result of his mission.

"Mr. Lutron was at none of the club-houses, Miss. They said at Watier's, that directly after the unfortunate affair had happened, he had gone out of town."

"What unfortunate affair?" said I, now completely rousing myself, and feeling a presentiment that the floodgates of misfortune once opened, there would be no bounds to its inroads.

"I don't exactly know, Miss," said Maurice, passing his hand over his eyes, as he hurried out of the room; "but they say it's all in the papers."

With a trembling hand I seized the uppermost one, which happened to be "The Morning Chronicle," and the first thing I saw, in large letters, was:

"AWFUL SUICIDE OF DINGLY VAVASOUR, ESQ.,
"OF MARMIONDALE, YORKSHIRE."

It was some seconds before I could see to read the

following paragraph in the paper I held so convulsively clenched in both my hands:

"Last night the whole neighbourhood of St. James's was thrown into consternation by the suicide of the above-named gentleman, so long known on the turf and in the fashionable world. What renders this awful event doubly terrible are the circumstances under which it was committed; for we regret to state that it took place in a hell in St. James's Street. It appears that for the last three months the deceased had been in the habit of winning, and also occasionally of losing large sums nightly, in this particular pandemonium, to Lord Y——, General G——, and the Honourable T—— L——; but that for the last week he had had an uninterrupted run of ill luck. About two o'clock this morning, he announced his intention of setting his fate literally upon a cast, and bartering his fine estate of Marmiondale, which has a rental of thirty-two thousand a year, for the comparatively paltry sum of one hundred thousand pounds. In justice to the Honourable T—— L——, with whom he was then playing, it must be stated that the latter declined these fearful odds—first, because he had not that sum, though it would have been easy to have raised it on the property had he won; and next, because, he said, he considered it a robbery.

"Lord Y——, however, who was supping at a table in the same room, was not so scrupulous, and said, 'I'll take the odds, and L——, as you are in the vein to-night, you shall throw for me.' Still, Mr. L—— remonstrated, when the deceased said, putting the dice-box into his hand, 'Dang it, Tom, if Lord Y—— likes to oblige his friends, why should you put a spoke in their wheel.' After a still further demur, the Honourable T—— L—— at length unfortunately consented, and threw sixes; Mr. Vavasour, throwing tray-deuce. 'Surely, my Lord,' cried Mr. L——, in great consternation, 'you'll give Vavasour another

chance?' 'By all means, if he likes,' asssented Lord Y——.

"'Not for the world,' deprecated Mr. Vavasour, coolly putting both his hands into his coat-pockets, and with the left, drawing forth a paper, which he laid on the table, while, with the right, before any one could see what he was about, or prevent him, he had seized a small, hair-trigger pistol, and, placing the muzzle in his mouth, discharged it. Lord Y——, who was carrying a glass of champagne to his lips, had the wine dashed over him, by the glass being completely filled with the unfortunate gentleman's brains, with which he was also bespattered.

"The contents of the paper, which had evidently been deliberately drawn up, were as follow: 'A little more, or a little less odium upon a man's character, when he is beyond the reach of feeling, or resenting it, is very immaterial. And open confession, they say, is good for the soul; so here goes for my soul, if I have one, and if not, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. If I win the hundred thousand pounds, I have proposed to myself to obtain, I shall start instanter for another hemisphere, and change my name. The mortgage on Marmiondale (one up to the very eyes of its uttermost value) having, after a long and ineffectual struggle on my part, been foreclosed the day before yesterday; and consequently not worth a song to whomsoever may win it. Whereas, that luckless individual's hundred thousand pounds will be of infinite use to me, should he lose them; but if not, why then I have only to end a life, which has long been almost as much burdened as Marmiondale.

"I am sorry for that poor boy, my nephew, Philip, as I screwed him so very tight upon the strength of his future heirship; and his mother, I really am sorry for her—not the less so for having hated her for the last twenty years, though I began by loving her, and had she listened to reason, I'd have joined forces with her against my brother: but she wouldn't and your

high-minded, virtuous, conscientious people, are damnably in the way of a clever enterprising family like ours; so the only way is to crush them, and that, I flatter myself I have done effectually;—ha! ha! and through her idol—her son, too; for I have taken good care in his education that he should only see, feel, hear, or believe what I chose; varnishing the whole with great apparent amiability and softness of manner—for the world is so moral that it never countenances any evil that has not a fair appearance: from long experience, I know that better than any one. All one's poisons must be administered in sugar—all one's daggers sheathed in velvet, which keeps them bright and sharp for using in the dark. The restraint of bolts and bars is revolting to the professed notions of English justice and independence; but cut off your victim's feet (only be sure you make them wear very long clothes to hide it), and then you may propitiate public opinion—that wonderful pivot of society! by leaving all the doors and windows of their prison-house wide open without any fear of the said victim's escaping you. And this, my dear nephew, is precisely the game I have been playing all my life, with you and your mother; and who pitied her? blamed you? or cursed me? *no one!*—nor wouldn't had I lived till doomsday, and retained the small house in Berkeley Square, and the large one at Marmiondale, to receive them in; for it is not so much charity as ostentation that covers a multitude of sins with us. Therefore, I really am, as I before said, sorry, my dear boy, that it is only in my power to bequeath you the former, which is a cold look out; and I fear your father's and my name, which we cannot alienate from you, will not give you much credit to trade upon; for though we, as rich men, might do anything or everything with impunity, upon you as a poor one, the odium of our deeds will descend with unpardonable severity.

"But to explain how you come not even to be heir

to several hundred thousand pounds worth of mortgages, *on peut être plus fin qu'un autre*, as Rochefoucault truly says, *mais non plus fin que tous les autres*; and it appears that my Phœnix of an attorney, Mr. Christopher Barnavelt, a sort of ambulating El Dorado, as I used to think him, for obtaining money for me when no one else would or could, was, in reality, playing old Belzoni's deep-laid scheme of revenge, to ruin the brother and son of the man who had seduced his wife; and that the real mortgagee he had got for me, instead of being simply one Mr. Joel Dalquharn, as I had imagined, was in reality Joel Dalquharn Belzoni, he having had a Scotch godfather it seems, who with £60,000, the foundation of his colossal fortune, had bequeathed him his own name of Dalquharn; and when this golden pippin of his deep revenge, which he irrigated with treacherous loans, was sufficiently ripe to drop from its feeble stem, he was of course there ready to receive it; and the day before yesterday, knowing that I had no means of meeting it, he foreclosed his mortgage, thereby making you and me beggars!

"As the only reparation in my power to make to you and your mother (for I think it ungentlemanlike to die without offering you some sort of satisfaction), I shall take every means to make this statement as public as possible, by leaving it on the table of the gambling-house in St. James's Street. I hope you and your mother will be able to live in some way or other, though I'm sure I don't know how. As to keep her more in the power of our family, her paltry annuity (not a jointure) was to cease with my life; however, one reads in novels and romances of widows living upon nothing, with either an only son or half-a-dozen children, if the author prefers it, and getting on very well; and I'm sure I hope she and you may be able to take out the same sort of patent. I know this document, as the lawyers will call it, will be copied

into every newspaper in the kingdom; and I wish it to be so, that I may have the satisfaction of letting the world know of what a precious set of time-serving cowards it is composed, now that I no longer want it or fear it. These are the last words (to the authenticity of the writing of which, Christopher Barnavelt, Solicitor, of Hatton Garden, London, and my steward, James Haverford, can swear) of me

"Dudley Churchill Vavasour,
"Late of Marmiondale,
"West Riding of Yorkshire."

"April 27th, 1813."

Philip a beggar! Poor Philip! and that was all I could say as the paper dropped from my hand—all I could think, for, indeed, I was stunned, as it were, with this terrible influx of misery! Mechanically I seized a pen, and mechanically I wrote. What? to Philip—to say I would now marry him on any terms; and then I recollected the generous present I was making him of beggary to beggary, neither did I know where he was; so I utterly tore up what I had written. My brain felt on fire, but I did not cry. Oh, no! I did not cry—I could not, it seemed as if the sea had rolled over my heart and suddenly frozen there, for it could neither contain nor overflow another drop. I paced the room, but I could not get away from myself, for the torture was in me. I looked wildly round the gloomy place as if I would force some tangible, incarnate love out of its inanimate lumber; but nothing changed, there was still death on one side and despair on every other! I leant my burning forehead against the locked door of my dead father's room. I almost reproached him for his unkindness in leaving me. Oh, Death! thou black, black slanderer! that is always "separating chief friends," verily the valley of thy shadow is tessulated with broken hearts.

Poor Nelly followed me like *my* shadow, but she uttered no sound, but let me monopolize all that agony has of expression, and I was grateful to her for her forbearance. Oh! it is terrible, very terrible, to feel the withering of this sudden winter of the heart. I had risen that morning young, I was now old; for when affliction takes up the glass of Time, she shakes into minutes the sands of ages from her grasp.

"Nelly," cried I, turning to her and convulsively seizing her shoulders, "I *cannot bear it!*"

"It *is* a heavy burden for so young a heart, God help you! but shure, darlint, Sur George, and Miss Grace, and dat good kind Mrs. Vavasour will soon be here to help you to bear it, think of dat and take courage."

"Mrs. Vavasour!" she was a beggar, too. Oh! now I thought she must marry Uncle Paulett, and here at least was the refraction of a slight gleam of hope; but poor Philip! what was to become of him? left a beggar with the fearful curse of such an education as his had been, one of false pride, false aims, false ends, false feelings, or what comprises all other fallacies in one, that omnipotent and omnipresent bane, *a false position!* all this as I again paced the room was I weighing and analyzing; but only to extract beyond a doubt the poison without being able to find a single antidote, when the door opened, and Dowling brought me Mrs. Penrose's answer. I opened it and felt very sick as I read it; but the nausea of contempt is often salutary to an overburdened heart, and by turning its misery into another channel, relieves it of some of its "perilous stuff." Here is the note:

"Dear Miss Sedley,

"While Mr. Penrose and myself beg to offer you our sincere sympathy for your unfortunate position, he desires me to say how much he regrets that he

[redacted] my paternity take charge of any young person, even for the short space you mention: but you must come to Providence, who will surely not desert you—with our united best wishes and Heaven's love,

"Believe me to be most sincerely yours,

"MARY PENROSE.

"[redacted]
"[redacted]"

"Will I mind the poor things, Miss?" asked Nelly.

"Your mother?"

"Will I mind?" said Nelly hesitatingly, and looking up in the face, "but was for you to go to some other's house."

"Nonsense!" returned I hurriedly, "there are no others in the world to me. At least they have no claims to receive them at—that, Nelly, and then you see what mothers and children are made of."

"I'm sure I don't mention" sighed Nelly, putting the corner of her apron to her eyes, "but mistress, if it's anything that I, poor girl that know it, the Lord above knows my heart is sore enough and heavy enough already."

"Then you will mind them as it will do you good, for I feel harder already," said I, turning from Penrose's face to Nelly.

"Don't tell me, Miss, but she's Miss Scott Barry as was, for all round Mistress Sycamund's fine clothes her spirit is quite low, was given back to so genteel a [illegible] as I should."

"The same, Nelly?"

"Yes, to be sure Miss, not be same, for every one knew that Miss Mary Scott Barry was as purty, and

* This note is an extract from a fine-minded letter, which was addressed in answer to a request for temporary shelter, to a poor girl who had been left destitute in consequence of the generosity of her parents, who had given up an alienated property to the writer, in the same manner, and under the same circumstances, that Godfrey Sedley is described as having done to his cousin.

as good, and as ginerous, and open-hearted a girl, as iver stepped."

"Ah, Nelly, we never know what people are till circumstances prove them; there is a test for metallic gold, and till tested, much Pinchbeck passes for such; but, depend upon it, adversity is the only test for the gold of character, either in ourselves or others. Forgive me, Nelly, for all my selfishness this morning, as if you had not enough to bear without bearing my burden, too; but I will exert myself, I will indeed."

"De Lord be good to me! listen to her, is it mad you want to dhrive me, Miss Miriam, alannah! shure, what would de likes of me be good for, if it wasn't to do what little I could for such as you?"

"Well, dear, good Nelly, I know the fountain of your kindness is never dry, and I have plenty of drains on it still; you see Mr. Lutron is out of town, so you, Nelly, will have to manage everything about my poor father's funeral, and I need not tell you that I'm sure Uncle Paulett will repay you everything."

"Whisht now, Miss Miriam, don't go and spoil all your goodness by spaking to me as if I was wan of dem cowld-hearted copper-minded English, dat has but wan thought on earth, and dat's money; shure whativer I have, wasn't it in de poor masther's house I got it; and doesn't what was his belong to his child by lawful right, widout making spaches about it?"

"I'll tell you what belongs to me, you do, thank God, my poor Nelly," said I, throwing my arms round her neck, and once more able to cry, which was a great relief.

"Ah! now Miss Miriam, darlint, you spake raison, and it's a pleasure to hear you; and now lie down, and try and get a little slape."

"Nelly," said I, throwing myself on the sofa to please her; "when it's all over, we'll go to Uncle Paulett's house; we shall at least be safe there."

"We will so, darlint, and I'm sorry I had not de sinse to think of dat at fust."

Here a gentle knock came to the door; Nelly went to open it; it was Monsieur de Maillepré.

"You know," said I putting out my hand to him—

"Yes, I know everything," he replied, pressing my hand affectionately between both of his, and then added: "I was here two hours ago; be assured I have seen to everything; and here is a little note I have brought you from Madame de ——. She wishes you to go there this evening—and will send for you by and bye; no one will see you, and you shall have rooms entirely to yourself."

I opened the note; it was from the French Ambassadress, whom I had never yet seen; it was the very quintessence of kindness—for there is no kindness so subtile as that of high breeding, upon the rare occasions that one is fortunate enough to meet with it. She began by regretting that our acquaintance should commence under such melancholy auspices; and begging I would pardon her want of ceremony in begging of me to come to the Embassy—but that from Monsieur de Maillepré's so constantly speaking of Grace and me, she almost imagined we were old acquaintances; and that I must consider her half a compatriot, and a little related, as Grace would be her cousin when married to M. de Maillepré."

I pressed his hand when I had finished reading this note, and said, "Thank you ten thousand times, for all your considerate, delicate kindness, for I know it is all your doing. Nevertheless, my deep gratitude is due to Madame de ——, and I leave you to express it to her; and at the same time beg of her not to doubt its sincerity if I decline her most kind hospitality;—but nothing could induce me to leave this house till my poor father's remains have done so, and then I will go to my Uncle Paulett's; but indeed, indeed, I am equally grateful to you, and to her, for your kindness."

"Well, dear Miriam," said he rising, "I cannot combat a resolution that does you credit, and which, therefore, I so much approve; every morning I shall come down to know if I can be of any use; but don't think it necessary to see me because I come; only remember that whatever you, or any one else wants, I, your *brother*, am the fittest person to apply to. I had a letter from Grace this morning, and she and Mrs. Vavasour, thank Heaven, will be here next week."

I shuddered.

"What is the matter?" asked he.

"Have you not heard," said I, pointing to the newspaper, "of the suicide of that bad man, Dingly Vavasour; and that poor thing, to crown all their villany to her, is now left perfectly destitute."

"Yes, yes, I know the whole of that tragedy," said he, tightly pressing his fingers on his eyes, "but between us all, we must contrive that she does not remain so."

"Oh! I know her; she is too proud to live on any one's charity."

"Charity! *fie donc, petite belle-sœur!* When friends help one another, do you call that charity? We must be great bunglers indeed if we let her think so; and it is a favourite principle of mine, that there is a *way of doing everything*, and that some persons might pay your bakers' bills, even out of charity! and wound your feelings less, than others would in inviting you to dinner to meet royalty."

"You are right," said I; "I have not lived all my life with dear Uncle Paulett, without being perfectly aware of the sort of 'white magic' that real benevolence possesses, of making apparently the most impossible things feasible, and of ennobling and refining what in clumsy hands would be the most coarse and humiliating."

I again cordially shook hands with him, and he

took his leave, saying he would send Nelly back to me. She had not returned many minutes, and was urging me to go up to my own room, as they were beginning to light the miserable little consumptive street lamps, when the drawing-room door opened, and Helen Penrose rushed in, and threw her arms round my neck, followed by a lady, who was crying bitterly, and whom I afterwards learnt was her mother. As soon as my little friend Helen had released me, she also threw herself upon my neck, and when her sobs would allow her to speak, she said:

"Oh! Miriam, do not think I could be such an utter wretch as to write you that cold-blooded, ungrateful, I may say inhuman, note, which you received from me an hour or two ago; but Mr. Penrose stood over me, and *made* me write it; and you know," added she, bitterly, "he is my lord and master!" But, thank heaven, I had a pair of diamond ear-rings not included in my *bill of sale*, that he knew nothing about, and those I have sold, and got this £100, if it can be of the slightest use to you. And oh! do, do, pray believe, that if I had *one* particle of free-will—which, unfortunately, I have not—my Grandmother Sigismund's Gloucestershire property should be restored to you, its lawful owner; as indeed, with his own fortune, which is £7000 a-year, Mr. Penrose does not want it; and it seems such a cruel, barbarous robbery, of you, who are now penniless, and have been so kind to my child and his. But then, to be sure, this would be only an act of simple justice, and those are of no account in this world. Whereas, only a month ago, he subscribed £5000 towards the building of a church, and all the papers have been ringing with puffs of his munificence, exalted piety, and Christian charity. Oh! Miriam! when you marry, take warning by me and never place yourself in a state of abject dependence on your master for every shilling; so as that your

duty to God has continually to be set aside, from a mean, monetary obedience to his will, however crooked, and however wrong."

"I am not likely ever to marry," said I; "and even if I should, having nothing, the settlements will be easily made."

"Not so, child. See that something is settled upon you, by the man whose slave you are to be for life; for it is positively immoral for any human being, with an immortal, and therefore accountable soul, to be in any other human being's power, so helplessly and hopelessly, as I am in Mr. Penrose's."

And here my poor cousin burst into a fresh paroxysm of tears.

"I am most truly grieved, my dear Mary," said I, "that you have so much cause for tears; but don't fret upon my account, as indeed you have done everything for me that I required; for to find you so kind, good, and generous, is to me at this bitter moment of accumulated trial and suffering, such an unspeakable relief—such a resuscitating comfort—that I feel I never can be sufficiently grateful to you for it; but your money, dear Mary, though much touched by your kindness, I do not want; for God has raised me up such good friends, that all my necessities have been anticipated and supplied."

"Ah! you will not take even that much from me," said she.

But knowing from experience how chilling and disheartening it is, when one has gone out of one's way, and made some sacrifice to serve people, to have both one's intention and one's exertion thrown back upon one, I put out my hand for the money, and said:

"You are not only kinder, but wiser than I am, my dear Mary, for I may, perhaps, have occasion for your generosity—so I will keep it, and see; and I assure you it will be a real pleasure to me to owe my deli-

[redacted] from my mention to your considerate kindness," [redacted] I [redacted] my own reasons for wishing to find out where she had sent her emeralds to serve me, I added: "Now I am so afraid you did not get the full value for your diamonds. Where did you sell them?"

"Oh yes—I am sure I did, for I sold them at Lucy's, in Bond Street. I am so much obliged to you, dear Miriam, for making these few beggarly pounds, because now I feel sure that you believe that I am incapable of making you or your lover robbed."

"How unkindly I do; but you give it rather too strong a name, my dear Mary, for a voluntary gift."

"Not a bit too strong, for there are certain gifts, which to accept is to commit a robbery. Dear me! it is almost dark, and we have only Ivers, my maid, with us. I did not want Mr Penrose to know where I was going, he would have been so angry."

"Oh, dear darling Miss [redacted] do let me stay with Miriam to-night," said Susan, putting her arms round her friend's neck.

"My dear love, how can I, if your Papa should ask for you?"

"No, no, he will [redacted]," said Susan, arranging it all her own way. "And you know he comes to Richmond to-day with the Lord [redacted]; and I'll be back very early to-morrow morning, long before I have to go in and wish him good morning at his breakfast."

"Well, dear, I suppose you must, if Miriam wishes it. For goodness, you have invited yourself," said Mrs. Penrose, who was evidently not in the habit of refusing this dear and fair child anything.

"Me?" said I. "I shall indeed be only too glad to have my poor little puppy-dog back again, for I suppose Susan has told you that at school she was my dog."

"Your pet dog, there; for don't you remember how

you used to feed me, and pet me? *I* do, if you don't."

"And I assure you, Miriam, that I do, too," said poor Mary Penrose, as she kissed, and wished me good-bye; adding, in a voice choked with emotion: "Although I am not allowed to prove it to you in the slightest manner."

"So then you rate my poor Helen here at nothing? and the diamond earrings?"

"Nothing, to what I would do were I let."

"Well, my dearest Mary, that is everything," said I, embracing her; for the intent is the only real part of any action; and even of acts prevented, the intention remains. By *that* only does God judge us, and by that only should his creatures be roused either into resentment or gratitude. So weighed by this true weight, and measured by this just and full measure, think, dear Mary, how much I owe you, and which I assure you I repay you in kind, that is, in all sincerity of esteem and affection."

"God bless, and thank you, dear Miriam, for saying so, at least," said poor Mary.

And so we parted. The unknown love of many years, thus unexpectedly dropped into our cup of mutual affliction, to soften its sharpness, and sweeten its bitterness; for so it is, that the sleepless mercy of our Heavenly Father, when our weary spirits are most faint, drops manna into our wilderness, and revives them with the angel-food of LOVE and PITY!

"Helen," said I, as soon as her mother was gone, "as you have again put yourself under the yoke, you must obey me as implicitly as you used to do at Concave House."

"With all my heart," said this affectionate little creature, hanging round my neck. "I'll go up the chimney, if you tell me do so."

"No; I won't be quite so unreasonable; but give

me your honour you'll do exactly as I want you to do?"

"Yes, upon my word and honour—anything, unless it's to go back home now, and that I really will not do, even to please you."

"No, it's not that, for I never punish myself, I leave that to others to do; so remember you have promised."

"Yes; anything, everything."

"Well, first of all were you with your Mamma when she sold her diamond ear-rings?"

"Yes; why?"

"Because I want you to take these two fifty pound notes back to Grey's and say, what is the exact truth, that a lady a cousin of your Mamma's, wishes very much to have those particular ear-rings, and I'll send Nelly and Maurice with you; and it's not five minutes' walk from here."

"Oh, but darling, poor Mamma will be so hurt and disappointed if you don't keep that money."

"Indeed, dear Helen, I would keep it with all my heart if I wanted it, but I don't; however, do not suppose that I am going to be so coarse and ungrateful as to give your dear kind mother back her ear-rings directly, on no account; I'll keep them for some months, and indeed if I find that I should be in want of further resources I'll even sell them again. There, will that satisfy you?"

"Not quite; but you've got me into the trap, so I suppose I must submit."

"Most decidedly you must," said I, and I rang for Nelly, and told her to get ready to accompany Miss Penrose with Maurice as far as Grey's the jewellers, in Bond Street; only come and undress me first, Nelly, for I'll go to bed, as I feel very ill."

"Dat's right, Miss, it's de best ting you can do."

Helen was not long before she returned with the

ear-rings; and goodness knows whatever little kindness I had had it in my power to show her at school, she more than repaid by her devoted and affectionate care of me for that miserable week; for her mother most kindly allowed her to pass every night with me, returning the next morning. The day after my poor father's death, Tom Lutron arrived; but with great kindness and good feeling he went to an hotel, and by Nelly's account, Dingly Vavasour's awful death seemed to have sobered and subdued him into quite a different person. On the day of my poor father's funeral, I got out of bed, and tottered to the window, where I remained riveted till I saw the coffin put into the hearse; the street I perceived was perfectly lined with carriages; for this mark of worldly respect, most kind and therefore most grateful under the circumstances, I felt we were indebted to the active amiability and delicate tact of Eugène de Maillepré.

When the mournful procession at length moved on, I was completely overpowered and fainted, for it was the only time in my life that I had seen the first and last of Death, and his prey was my own father!

* * * * *

When I regained my senses, I was in bed, with one hand held by Grace, and the other by my dear Uncle Paulett, not blind, as I had feared, but with the same dear, brilliant, kind, honest, and deeply intelligent eyes as ever. Oh! I was too happy! I hated myself for being so, in the midst of that very heart upon which my poor father's corse still weighed so heavily.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

About thirteen months had passed since my father's death, which had left me a penniless orphan. I was now a rich heiress; my dear uncle had surmounted his difficulties, and was again installed in his own house in Berkeley Square; the sole management of which he had committed to me, my aunts having, for the good of their health in particular, and decidedly for the good of the family in general, decided upon expatriating themselves, and taking up their abode at Palermo. Right glad was I that I *could* manage a house; and by contributing to his hourly and daily comfort, and well-being, return to that dear, kind, more than parent, a few crumbs of the bread which he had so lavishly cast upon the waters of my life. And although pecuniary economy, in the literal acceptation of the term, was now a thing of no moment to either of us, yet domestic economy, or the art of contributing to the moral and physical, *bien être* of those about us, is a talent equally necessary in a palace, or a prison.

The manner of our transition from poverty to wealth was this. About four months after the death of Dingly Vavasour, poor Belzoni followed his child to the grave; and one morning Mr. Christopher Barnavelt called upon my Uncle Paulett, in a hackney-coach, from which he alighted, with a tin deed-box in his hand, and

upon being ushered into my uncle's presence, told him that he was the bearer of good tidings to him "and the young lady," if the one he then saw was Miss Miriam Sedley; for that his client, Mr. Dalquharn Belzoni, recently deceased at Paris, had bequeathed to that young lady the fine, and now perfectly unincumbered property of Marmiondale, in the West Riding of Yorkshire; that to her sister he had only left £2,000 a-year, as she was about to make a good marriage. To Mrs. Vavasour, relict of the late Edward Hargrave Vavasour, £3,000 a-year, as he considered that she had been quite as much the victim of the Vavasour family as he had; but to this bequest there was a clause, that she should not, on any pretext whatsoever, alienate even £100 per annum as a separate allowance to her son, Philip Hargrave Vavasour; that if he chose to live with her, she was of course at liberty to supply his wants and wishes, as liberally as she pleased; also if he married, with her perfect approval, as well as consent, she was free to make what settlements she pleased upon him.

"And further," continued Mr. Barnavelt, who had by this time extricated the will from the tin box, and unfolded it, "To my dear and ever valued friend, General Sir George Warburton Paulett, Bart., G.C.B., K.C., and K.S.P., of Berkeley Square, in the parish of St. James's, London, and of the Priory near ——, Downshire, Ireland, who never cringed to me in my prosperity, but courted and consoled me in my supposed adversity, I bequeath £150,000 in the three per cent. consols; also whatever plate, wine, books, goods, chattels, or other personals I may die possessed of. I further constitute him my sole residuary legatee. Neither must I forget my friend Sir Joseph Paulett, K.G.H., better known during the Peninsular war as Don José Paulett. To him (as a sense of my gratitude for his unceasing attentions to me during

security; and the repose was so novel and delightful, that I wished to prolong it. At length my uncle broke the silence, by again exclaiming "Poor Belzoni!" as he sank down into an easy chair beside the fire; and then he said, looking at me with one of his dear, kind, melancholy smiles:

"And so my Mirry is now a great heiress; but if she's the same girl I used to know of that name, I don't think she'll keep all she's got, but divide it with that poor boy."

"I'll keep every shilling of it!" cried I, almost fiercely.

My uncle stared, stopped dead short in the act of taking a pinch of snuff, and said:

"Good heavens! is it possible, so soon!"

"Yes, dear uncle, everything is possible," said I, seating myself on his knee, and throwing my arms round his neck, while with many kisses, and hiding my face against his, I told him all that had passed between me and Philip Vavasour, and of the plan I had in my head about him, which I was dying to communicate to his mother.

"Ah! *à la bonne heure!*" cried my uncle, drawing a long breath as he put out his hand to me. "I thought my Mirry could not but turn out an honest fellow at last, no matter how many acres she was clogged with!" and so saying, he rang the bell for his hat and gloves, and we walked together to Mrs. Vavasour's, whom my uncle and Monsieur de Maillepré had contrived, some months before, to persuade that the mortgagee of Marmiondale had been induced generously to continue her annuity on the property during her life; and she, never having been troubled with *l'embarras des richesses*, easily believed whatever they chose to tell her on the subject; and they were so accustomed to those sort of pious frauds, that I think they would have had the art to make black appear

while to serve a fellow-creature as so many possess the same ability not to injure and to betray, their neighbours.

When we reached Mrs. Vavasour's, we found Mr. Beaumont at the door, he having first returned to Fenhurst for some papers he had forgotten. My uncle asked him if he would have the goodness to postpone his interview with Mrs. Vavasour till the next day, or name a couple of hours later on that one, as we had very particular business with her then. He said, certainly, and that he would return at the end of two hours, as he had one or two calls to make in the neighbourhood.

When we told her that Beaumont had left her £2,000, but that he had left nothing to Philip, she burst into tears, and said

"[redacted] what will he do?" And then added "and what has he [redacted]?"

Then I [redacted] told her, as I had promised, that no [redacted] had passed between me and Philip. "But," I continued, "I have no doubt for some days I shall be more than I had for some months previously, [redacted] much as I [redacted] Philip will [redacted] me in many [redacted] points in his character are very [redacted] and I have great faith that a few months in the school of Nature, that is to say [redacted] will [redacted] you will be [redacted] the [redacted] years, however desirable and [redacted] [redacted] I will not, on any account, [redacted] be made unhappy with my acceptance of [redacted] and I do not think if a sufficient provision I find that he does not [redacted] and that without the [redacted] of selfishness, in the exercise of pride. It is [redacted] to be independent of you, and that he [redacted] has [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] to be poor, and is willing to work diligently at some honourable profes-

sion in order to support me, and has your sanction for making me his wife, I shall then gladly marry him; but if, on the other hand, all the love he has professed and thought he had for me was merely a passing fancy, but that he has gained and improved in every other way, why then I will restore to him his property of Marmiondale intact, for you know," concluded I, as the tears filled my eyes at the remembrance of my poor father, 'as the Irishman said of his wooden leg, *it runs in the blood*' of our family not to retain unjustly alienated estates, and I hope I shall not be the first to degenerate."

Mrs. Vavasour cried, and embraced me several times, and then said—

"No, my dear Miriam, that would not be fair, for Marmiondale is lawfully yours."

"Lawfully, yes; but justly, no; and you are aware they are but too often very different things."

"My dear child, you have made me so happy by telling me of your engagement to Philip."

"Softly, my dear Mrs. Vavasour; no engagement; the whole thing is in abeyance; and moreover depending upon all the "ifs" and "buts," and "may or may never bes," that I have just explained to you."

"Oh, then it is certain," exclaimed Mrs. Vavasour; "for I am very sure Philip cannot but love you deeply and sincerely, and all the rest will follow; for a real affection for a worthy object is like the *bise*-wind in a sultry climate, it purifies, and restores a healthy tone to all around."

"But, Mirry," said my Uncle, "you must not be too hard upon the poor boy, and confound an honourable desire of rendering himself independent by seeking a profession with an impatience of his mother's control, or a proud sullenness under his dependent state."

"I think, Mr. Solon," said I, taking his dear face in both my hands, and kissing his fine, high, generous fore-

head, "that you may trust to my *superior wisdom* to discriminate between the two."

From that time I neither sought nor avoided Philip Vavasour; at first he rather avoided me, but I liked him all the better for that. He thought we were both beggars, and it showed an effort to do right. His mother told me, that he had had one or two sharp struggles with his false pride, at his utterly dependant position upon the parent whom all his life he had been *made* to despise and neglect; but she thought, and I thought, that these were but the crisis or turn in the constitution of his mind; gradually he no longer absented himself when I passed the evening at his mother's, and though the word or the subject of love never passed his lips, I could *feel* (for one always does feel it much more than one perceives it) that he now really did love me; the dross in those hot ebullitions in Maddox Street had risen to the surface, and boiled over; the pure ore had now formed, and I, like a greedy alchymist, watched its consolidating process. He never would sing with me, always pretending he was hoarse, or that he had no voice; nor was I sorry for this either, for anything like diffidence or mistrust of himself was to me as an additional seal set upon the truth of his regard for me; and, with many a reluctant sigh, at the end of ten months he began to urge my Uncle to fulfil his promise of getting him a diplomatic appointment; but, as he himself said, a poor devil of an unpaid *attaché* was a drear look out through the vista of many years.

But what made me happier than all else was, that though many erroneous notions had been sown in his education, there was evidently nothing false nor hollow in the substratum of his character; for at first he had been almost distant to his mother, least it should be thought that interest or necessity, (that strongest of all interests!) had wrought the change in him; but

when once he began really and truly to love her, he found out that she was not a person one could love by halves, he then gave way to the feeling honestly, without either the affectation of reserve, or the still worse affectation of display; and in this same genuine spirit he now began to urge my uncle to procure him some employment, although his affection for his mother might have furnished him with a legitimate, and unquestionable pretext for remaining quietly and inertly where he was. Meanwhile, my uncle, all in pretending to busy himself in getting him an *attaché*-ship, had adopted the Emperor Joseph the Second's motto of "*Festina lente*," which did not, however, prevent poor Mrs. Vavasour from becoming very impatient.

"Dear me," said she to me one day, "how tiresome you both are: I see that Philip's love for you, is eating his very life away, and I know that you love him, and yet there you both are, playing with your happiness till you will destroy it; and I know the end of it will be, that he'll go abroad and die of a broken heart."

"Not a bit of it," said I, laughing; "for in the first place, men *don't* die of broken hearts, the malady being contrary to masculine organization: and in the next place, sooner than he should go abroad, without a wife to take care of him, I'll do by him in particular as my friend Miss Dickens, (I beg her pardon, Mrs. Algernon Pipeclay,) used to advise me to do by men in general, that is, I'll give him encouragement, and if that's not sufficient, why really I don't see why a *British female! of my fortune!* should not in words, propose for the husband she woos."

It was a bright May morning, some days after this conversation, that I was sitting alone in the library, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who had come to England for Grace's wedding, having gone to Grey's with my uncle, to hurry the *parure* of brilliants, and opals, that he was to put in her *trousseau*, as the marriage

was to take place in a fortnight; when the door opened, and Philip was announced. The event was an unusual one; for he generally took care not to come in, when they said my uncle was out. I took up a pocket-handkerchief, I was embroidering for Mademoiselle de Guilleragues *pour me donner une contenance*, but laid it down to shake hands with him.

"I have brought you," said he, with a slight hesitation of manner, "some lilies of the valley."

"I prefer moss-roses," said I, laying them down; "do you remember two you once gave me long ago?"

"Do you still remember those?" he said, blushing as deeply as I ought to have done, but did not.

"I never forget anything," replied I, pragmatically resuming my work, and plying my needle assiduously; "it would not do, you know, for a person to have a bad memory who piques themselves upon being the most notable housekeeper in England, at least among '*British females!*' of my class."

He made no reply; and there was a pause of a few moments, which he employed in pulling the lilies of the valley he had brought me to pieces.

"Don't," said I, quietly rescuing the survivors from his persecutions; "for though I *prefer* moss-rose buds, these are very pretty," and I put them into my bosom.

"Miriam," said he, without however, taking my hand, or falling at my feet, but advancing his chair opposite to mine, till he nearly touched me, while he held his hat in both his hands, and looked in my face, I keeping my eyes the while steadily upon my work, "I fear you will now think me more selfish than ever, but I cannot leave the country, which Sir George gives me hopes of soon doing, without unburdening my heart, and telling you that I have never, for one moment, ceased to love you—and—and that if you

still had the slightest remnant of regard for me which, I fear, you have not; and could be content to climb the hill of life, which poverty always makes more steep as a poor man's wife, oh! with what a light heart I would toil! and how I should even rejoice at having lost Marmiondale! as I could not lay one particle of your kindness to me, to its account. And yet, indeed, it would not be such a sacrifice to you, as it would be to most girls, to marry a man without fortune; for I have seen you under all circumstances, and I never knew any one who so well understood how to neutralize—nay, I might almost say, to embellish poverty; for, in that dingy lodging in Maddox Street, which would have vulgarized, and distorted any one else, still your *entourage* was perfectly that of a gentlewoman: for instead of its sinking you, you raised it.

"I have since seen you in affluence, but wealth has also its vulgarity, that of show; but still with the same happy art you also avoid that, and invest luxury with ease, which is to it what grace is to beauty—its better part—its soul, or voice of light, animating yet subduing the material mass. In short, I know not, Miriam, whether you would most shine as a queen or a peasant's wife; as the former, I know you would be 'princessly' in manner and princely in deed; but as the latter, I feel you would be peerless. Is it any wonder, then, that I should be selfish enough to wish to drag you from that bright galaxy of which you are the cynosure, down to my own humble orbit. I am sure my mother loves you so well, that she would make the most liberal settlements on you in her power; but still, during her life time, (and may it be long), we should have to experience many privations—that is, to have many ungratified wishes; yet with all this, I feel that I am more worthy of you, or rather less unworthy of you, than I was when I fancied myself the heir to thirty-two thousand a-year; for one pure,

unadulterated draught from the well of Truth, is more invigorating to the mind, and bestows a deeper knowledge, than all that can be derived from the sophisticated Pierian spring of scholastic routine, or the conventional Hippocrene of the world; but still I fear, Miriam, *dear* Miriam! that you will say that all my love is selfishness—in short, that I am very, very selfish?"

"No, Philip!"

"Oh! thank you for calling me Philip again," interrupted he.

"I do not think you selfish now," resumed I, leaning back in my chair, letting my work fall on my lap, and joining the tips of the fingers of both hands together, so as to leave an archway between the palms, while I continued in a sort of *nonchalante*, self-sufficient voice, much resembling that in which men talk of what they would choose "*my wife!* to be, to say, and to do." "No, I do not think you the least selfish; but there are certain things that I should deem it necessary for *my!* husband to have. First, though no great admirer of Parliament and 'Parliament men,' under our present system, still I should choose my husband to possess the means of standing for his county, if he pleased; then I should like him, as much on my own account as on his, to have a yacht; and I should detest marrying a man who had no love for, or appreciation of the arts; and my fancy would be to encourage modern art, and canvass, and marble, to say nothing of base metals, are rather expensive, when properly cultivated. Then for myself, individually, I would rather do without my dinner than my opera box; moreover, I should require at least two thousand a-year to be settled upon me for my *menus plaisirs*, for I should by no means choose to be like poor Mary Penrose, totally unable to help a relation or even a stranger, whatever their distress might be, without the

sub rosâ sacrifice of my diamond ear-rings or some other gaud, for I hate underhand proceedings even in a righteous cause; and to be honest, one must be independent."

"Good God, Miriam!" said Philip, looking very pale, as soon as I had talked myself out of breath; "surely you are jesting! but it is a cruel jest, seeing that I can give you none of these things."

"Yes, you can, if you please."

"How, in heaven's name?"

"By marrying me," said I rising and putting my hand into his. He looked at me with parted lips and distended eyes, as if mutely asking which was the maniac, he or I? I then put up my hands joined together as in prayer, and looking piteously in his face, said, with a little childish moan—

"Pease, good Master Philip, will oo marry poor itty me?"

He caught me in his arms, and it was some minutes before he would listen to the explanation I had to give him of poor Belzoni's munificent bequest to me. When I had finished, a slight shade passed over his face, and he sighed deeply. I trembled, lest it should be his old familiar—pride, returned to alloy our gold.

"Philip," said I, "why do you sigh?"

"It is very glorious!—very like a fairy tale," he replied; "yet, my own—own dear Mirry, I almost wish that we were not so rich."

"Not that *I* was not so rich," probed I, raising my head from his shoulder; and holding up my finger menacingly at him, "you are quite sure, naughty boy, that it is not *that?*"

"Oh quite, quite sure. My sole comfort is, that it is *yours*, and not mine; but, dearest," whispered he, "with so much love we did not want so much money, did we?"

"You did not always think so—when marrying me

would have made you risk the loss of Marmiondale, and—"

"Oh! be merciful, and don't remind me of my former self," cried he, putting one hand across my mouth, while he clenched the other, and added in a sort of frenzy, "when I think of the selfish, sordid wretch I was, it is not even anger or contempt that I feel against myself, but it is positive fury!"

"So much the better; do you remember what Cicero says of Ajax? '*Semper Ajax fortis, fortissimus tamen in furore. Ipsa res verba rapiunt,*' and depend upon it, we are never so truly brave as when we feel a holy fury against all that is wrong, vicious, or degrading, whether in ourselves or others; for it is only from the hot ashes of the funeral pyre of evil, that the Phœnix Good ever rises.

The expedition of the lawyers did not quite keep pace with our wishes; but Monsieur de Maillepré kindly deferred his already-so-long delayed marriage another fortnight, so as that on that day month Grace and I might be married at the same time. The double weddings were very brilliant, and the day before, Nelly had come, with clasped hands and downcast eyes, to say she had a request to make me; but that raelly it was so beyand all raison, that she scarcely knew how to make it.

"My dear Nelly," said I, "there is no request you could make that I should think unreasonable; but even if I did, it should be quite as readily granted."

"God bless you, Miss; shure I know it, when you've had the goodness to give me a bonnet and dress fit for a quane to-morrow; and above all, to shend Misthress Marlowe in an oder carge, and let me go in de rumble of yours, as if I wash your own maid, and fit to discoorse wid de best of dem; and it's for dat raison dat I do be loath to encroach upon your goodness; but de bouldness and consate of dat Dermot bangs de world,

and not only sticks to him like his shadow, but like it sames to lengthen as hish days gits on; and now—wud you blave it?—noting will do him but dat he shud have your lave to take de lade of all de futmin, and open de carge dure for you when we do be setting off, after de wedding to-morrow."

"With all my heart," said I, laughing; "and pray give him this ten-pound note from me, Nelly, that he may buy gloves for the occasion."

At the breakfast we had, of course, nearly the whole of the *Corps Diplomatique;* and I have seldom seen a handsomer or a happier pair than Grace and M. de Maillepré. The Pauletts were all there, except Lady Mountflummery, who pleaded sudden indisposition. The Duchess of Clapperclaw had also honoured us with her company, looking even more splendid and voluminous than usual; and little Lord Catagraph, who was much grown, looked in his blue jacket and white trousers, as he stood by her side, like a narrow ribbon-marker in a large book. Helen, my little friend Jessey Fane (who was to sail in another month for India), and Ladies Lucy and Fanny Farnham were my bridesmaids —and in giving poor Mary Penrose a parting *souvenir* I also, with a long explanatory letter of gratitude, put into her hand the diamond earrings she had so kindly deprived herself of for me. Philip was radiant; never had I seen him look so handsome, for no shadow from within now darkened his beauty.

The Walthams and Dapperwitts were the gayest of the gay, but poor Madmoiselle de Guilleragues was out of one flood of tears into another, with a sort of nervous copyright anxiety about our every movement, declaring that she had not seen any such lovely, graceful, brides since the marriage of *La pauvre Dauphine!*

"Ma chère Demoiselle!" said Sir Joseph Paulett, "the simile is not a happy one, for the bridegrooms might have no fancy for resembling Louis Seize!"

"Cependant," cried M. de Maillepré, "Vavasour, et moi nous sommes logés à la même enseigne, car il y a bien de quoi perdre la tête!"

With this gallant retort courteous to Don Jóse's somewhat malicious speech, we rose from table, and as Philip and I went to take leave of our mother and uncle I thought, as they were standing on each side of a small table, like the two separated but not disunited trees on the seal, with the torrent rushing between them—

"What a pity!" and what I thought I uttered aloud.

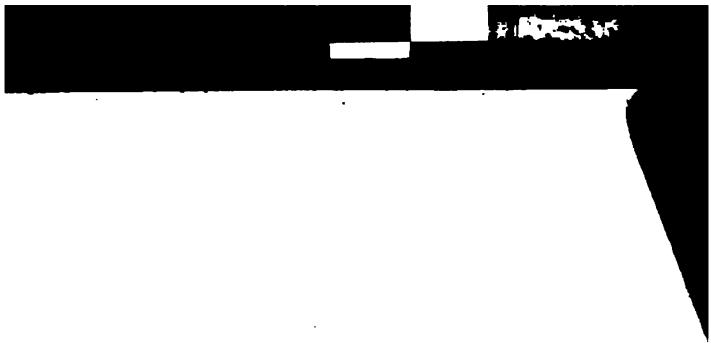
"No," said Mrs. Vavasour, as she folded us both in her arms; "for then our children could not have been united."

"No," echoed my dear uncle, as his tears fell upon my cheek, "for had I had two such daughters, I should have been too selfish an old fellow ever to have given them away."

The servants who lined the hall had strewed it knee-deep with flowers, and Jeffs, with a favour as large as a shield, stepped out of the ranks to present me with a rare bouquet of that beautiful purple, *flor de queresmo*, that I had never seen but in poor Belzoni's lonely sea-girt turret, at ——, and being surrounded by a coronal of white jessamine, it was really lovely. Nelly was installed in the rumble, with her veil down, to conceal the nationality of her face, and was leaning back as carelessly, and almost with as much dignity, as if she had been hatched a real London lady's-maid. I knew that she had been for the last four and twenty hours almost pounding Dermot into a state of quiescence, and telling him to be sure and kape his eyes steady to wan point, and his hands and arms to himself, as if he was made of card-board and buckram like the oder futmin, and not be swilling about like a pail too full of water; and so well had he obeyed her injunctions, that he now stood like a ramrod by the carriage door, in a new livery of

my Uncle Paulett's, his hair powdered, and a huge favor all running to seed over one side of his coat. However, *chassez le naturel, il revient au galop;* and, as I was getting into the carriage, in order to keep back the invading by-standers, he roared out in the voice of a Stentor, "Stand back, ye vagabones, bad manners to you!"

"Pray don't, Dermot," remonstrated I; "for Heaven only knows, that bad manners are our national curse already."

THE END.

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